

D&D CELEBRATION 2020 ANNOUNCED!

DRAGON+

ICEWIND DALE:
ART OF THE
FROSTMAIDEN

TASHA'S CAULDRON OF EVERYTHING

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

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ISSUE 33



Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 33

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Imagining The Ampersand: Wylie Beckert

The Magic: The Gathering artist cooks up two delicious covers for sorcerer superstar Tasha.



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Continue our tour of the hot new



D&D Celebration

2020

products coming soon to a tabletop near you...

An all-new live event makes expeditions to Icewind Dale even more memorable.

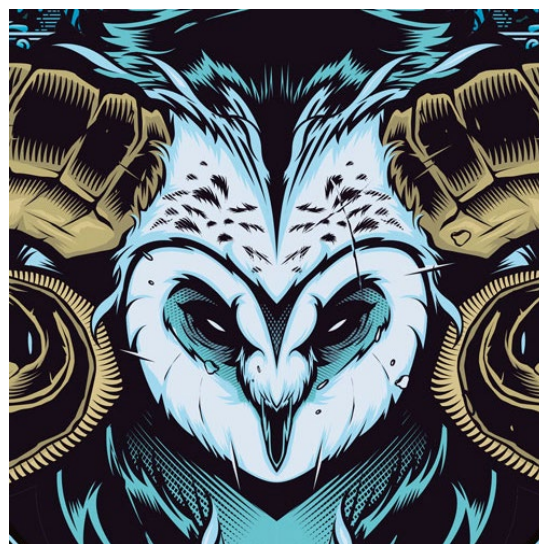


D&D Classics

Although the Games of the 32nd Olympiad have been postponed, there are still numerous in-game sporting events for your characters to undertake!

Unearthed Arcana: Feats & Subclasses Part 4

Sharing playtest possibilities for proposed new character feats.



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We dig beneath the permafrost to uncover Icewind Dale's best scenarios and resources.

Icewind Dale: Art of the Frostmaiden

Dragon+ spoke with the artists tasked with bringing Auril's three distinct forms to life.



Cut-Out-And-Keep Snowy Owlbear

Some assembly required! Break out the safety scissors and a glue stick, and build your very own Icewind Dale owlbear.



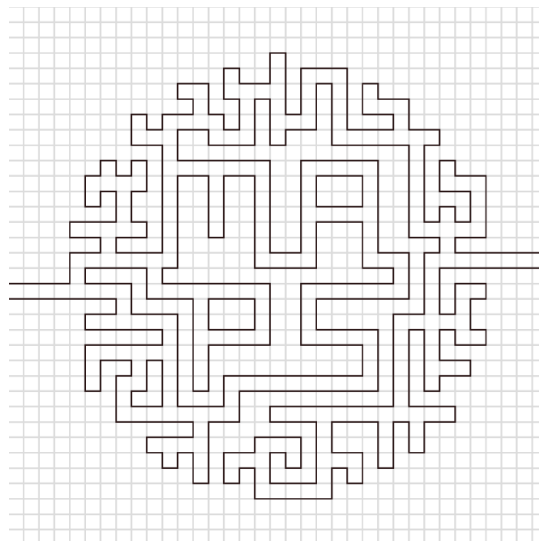
Streaming Highlights

Kingdom management, entertaining character builds, and mythic monsters are among this issue's video highlights.



Comic: Ravenloft

The stakes are high in this hilarious map capturing Barovia's battier side.



Maps of the Month: Mythic Odysseys of Theros and Tales of The Yawning Portal

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A big thank you to cover artist Wylie Beckert and everyone

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Best to light the jack o' lantern to
scare the shadows from our
pages this Halloween!

involved with the creation of this
issue.

DRAGON+ 33

Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 33

Guest Editor Hal Howard recounts his history with D&D and shares a footwear tip that may just save your character's life.

It's safe to say that this isn't my first brush with Dungeons & Dragons. I have a long history with the game that stretches back to its earliest days. I've been playing and DMing since junior high in 1979/80, and I ran AD&D first and second edition all the way through high school and college. Starting a career in computer software and moving to the Pacific Northwest in 1994 to work for Microsoft—I live in Sammamish, around 10 miles from the D&D Team's headquarters in Renton—kept me from playing third edition and 3.5. But I returned to run some fourth edition for my kids and a few friends, before fully jumping back in with fifth edition a few years ago.

I've been aware of the gaming community's amazing **Extra Life** fundraising efforts for some years now. When the opportunity arose to not only make a pledge to the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals the charity supports, but also to work with the D&D Team for a brief time, I couldn't turn it down. You're reading my words here and seeing my comments throughout the magazine because of that donation. But that wasn't the end of my collaboration...



Icewind Dale: Rime of the

Frostmaiden was announced at *D&D Live 2020* and my Guest Editor role included a money-*can*-buy opportunity (remember that when those crazy Extra Life rewards start to fly around later this year!) to get in on the playtesting. The D&D Team were kind enough to allow me to lead my group of players in a battle against the Frostmaiden herself, while also trying out some of the other mid-to-late parts of the campaign.

The hook for my players came through their time in Phandalin, where they had already met up with the Emerald Enclave. Any faction guarding against the abomination of nature is going to be concerned about the never-ending night in the north, so the party were dispatched to check out the situation.

There were four of them in the party, so I offered them all one uncommon magic item from the *Player's Handbook* or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Knowing their frosty destination, they all chose a pair of the *boots of the winterlands*. It's a fairly standard magic item and not so rare that only one of them could find a pair before they headed up to Icewind Dale, so I allowed it.

It turned out to be an inspired choice. Without the cold resistance those boots offered, Auril would have made icicles of them all.

The additional side encounters we got to try out were also fun to play. I appreciate the work that's been put into them because my wife Donna and I both like creating things and we've written for the DMs Guild. Our biggest title is *Residents of Trollskull Alley*, which is a "Platinum" seller. And it won't be my only contribution as I begin to enjoy my semi-retirement.

Knowing that my long history with the game is far from over makes me extremely happy.

Hal Howard

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ADVENTURE IS A DISH BEST SERVED COLD



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Imagining The Ampersand: Wylie Beckert

The Magic: The Gathering artist cooks up two delicious covers for sorcerer superstar Tasha.

by Matt Chapman



Fillet of a fenny snake? Check. Eye of newt and toe of frog? Naturally. Wool of bat and tongue of dog? Affirmative. Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting? Of course. Lizard's leg and howlet's wing? Yes, everything **William Shakespeare** suggested might be in a witches' brew can reasonably be expected to be floating in *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*. The clue's in the name...

In the same way that insane beholder crime boss Xanathar introduced

us to new character options, Dungeon Master's tools, spells, and magic items, Tasha is about to expand the limits of fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons.

The adopted daughter of the Baba Yaga, frenemy of Mordenkainen, and real name of *Demonomicon* author Iggwilv, she is now also the star of her own D&D sourcebook.

Former *Dragon*+ cover star **Magali Villeneuve** has created the stunning original cover for *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*, with Wylie Beckert fashioning an incredible alternative cover. The brief for that alt cover called for an image of the witch casting a spell at her cauldron, with characters and objects associated with Tasha appearing in the smoke. Beckert says she was given the freedom to decide the image composition.

“It’s a rare experience but extremely welcome. It gave me a chance to play with an image that was a little bit abstract and graphic, rather than painting a scene that felt like a movie still. I’m really grateful to Art Director Kate Irwin for trusting me with that level of creative freedom, as I always feel that the end result is more interesting when I’m allowed to run with something like this—not to mention more fun to work on!” she says.



The alternate cover of Tasha's Cauldron of Everything (select to view)

In a nod to that conceptual book cover, Beckert has brought the character to life for a second time on our cover this issue. She wanted this second illustration to be a little less “frenzied”, even though a certain vampire lord who’s been “**Revamped**” also needed to make his presence felt.

“It was a chance to refine my vision for Tasha, and play with a costume change. I wanted to create a composition that includes a lot of intricate detail and patterning but incorporate it into larger, simpler silhouettes for an image that felt statelier and more iconic,” she says, revealing that Strahd’s inclusion gave her the chance to practice drawing smoke. “I liked the idea of Strahd as a looming, ghostly presence. Still intimidating, but with Tasha feeling more solid and powerful despite her smaller size. She’s definitely the hero of this illustration, and her cocky expression shows she has the upper hand.”



Wicked Kingdom's Queen of Envy (select to view)

Please introduce yourself to *Dragon+* readers?

I’m a freelance illustrator, recently settled in the Pacific Northwest. When I’m not working on game art for the likes of *Magic: The Gathering* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, I’m crowdfunding my own independent projects through Patreon and Kickstarter. Heavily-illustrated poker decks are my current hustle, but I’ve also dabbled in fine art, fairytale illustration, and anything else that tells a story.

What led to you using playing cards as a canvas?

I started illustrating my first poker deck, *Wicked Kingdom*, as a side project early on in my career. I liked the idea of using the two-sided format of a playing card to create dual-identity characters and tell a story. A card deck seemed like a great way of creating a consistent body of work that would also serve a real purpose—it was a product that I could market directly to people who liked my art, at a time

when commissions were few and far between.

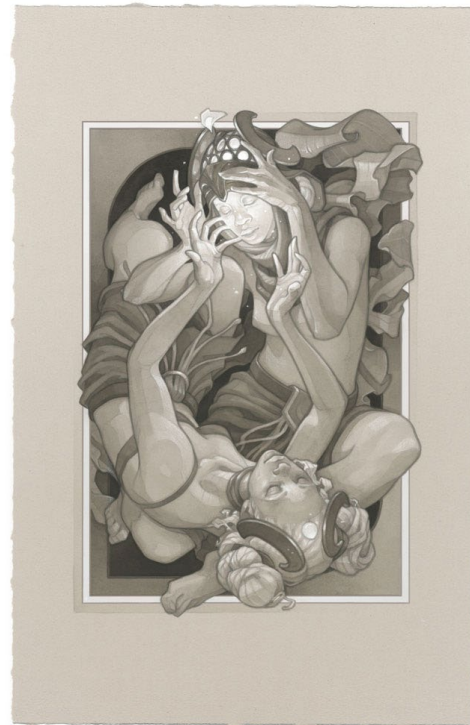
I launched the finished deck on Kickstarter, where it did well enough to justify my decision to continue down the path of self-directed illustration projects. I've been working on my current project, *Reign of Sin + Rule of Virtue*, for the past three years. The finished version of this two-deck set of playing cards based on the deadly sins and heavenly virtues will be coming to Kickstarter in early 2021.

What was it like to get a second opportunity to bring Tasha to life? And did you do anything differently?

I was really excited when Art Director Daniel Ketchum reached out to me as the first Tasha piece turned out to be one of my favorite covers. Of course, as soon as I finish a painting, I start to notice all the things I might have done differently, so getting the chance to revisit familiar subject matter was a dream come true. I wish I had the time and energy to double-dip on every painting.

What's your background in art. Are you largely self-taught or have you been officially schooled and trained?

Although I studied to get an art degree from a traditional college, I consider myself self-taught. A few years after graduating, I realized that I had zero art or business expertise and could just barely draw! I always tell students who are thinking of going to art school to look into alternatives, such as atelier programs, mentorships with working artists, and self-study. My real art education consisted almost entirely of library books and online tutorials. And it's still continuing to this day. It's fortunate that I decided to pursue fantasy illustration specifically, because the community has a lot of resources to offer artists who are just starting out. The *Muddy Colors art blog* is a great place to start.



Queen of Humility (select to view)

How would you describe your art style?

I've heard my style compared to art nouveau, comic books, and sculpture. But I think seeing your own style is like hearing your own accent. To me, it's everyone else who has a style, while I'm simply doing the best I can to draw what I see! If I catch myself "doing a style" by repeating certain visual tics or adding decorative flourishes where they don't belong, I almost always try to dial it back. It's too easy to stop growing and improving if you get stuck in existing patterns.



(Select to view)

Is there any one kind of art that captures your imagination?

I'm really drawn to golden age illustrators—Arthur Rackham, J.C. Leyendecker, and Alphonse Mucha in particular. They are all amazing craftsmen with an incredible level of technical skill, while still managing to be visually unique. You'd never mistake their work for a photograph but it still feels incredibly solid and “real”, as if they've created a world within their illustration that obeys its own set

of laws.

What's your creation process like?

My process for creating an image involves a lot of jumping back and forth between traditional and digital. But I'm a traditional artist at heart and my preferred media are pencils and inks. I start with a tiny thumbnail sketch in pencil to figure out the rough placement of all the elements of my image, then switch to Photoshop to tweak the composition and refine the drawing. The resulting rough sketch is printed out at low opacity, and used as the base for a tighter underdrawing in pencil and many layers of ink rendering.

While most of my finished paintings are fully traditional—especially work that requires tight deadlines and room for revisions—I'll do some pieces as a monochromatic ink and pencil underpainting in traditional media, then switch back to digital once more to add color and finish out the image.



Your alternative cover for *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* has a different style to many D&D cover images. Was this drawn or painted?

The bulk of this piece was done in pencil and ink. Colors, including an extra boost of deeper values, were then added as transparent layers in Photoshop. While there's some painting involved, I definitely consider most of my work to be 'drawn'. I'll spend many hours

sketching and redrawing, getting every pencil line just right. After that point, the touches of ink wash and, in this case, digital color are almost an afterthought. The drawing is everything!

There are a lot of hidden elements within that image. What should Tasha fans be looking out for?

My favorite thing to hide within the image was the spell *Tasha's hideous laughter*. In the art brief, this was meant to be a scroll with identifying text on it. But I wanted to find a more subtle way to show it, hence the possessed scroll of laughing imps and skulls. The art brief also called for Graz'zt to be "looking flirtatious". I figured the flirtiest he could get would be offering Tasha a uniquely demonic valentine.



How did your series of videos capturing your working process come about?

I like to exhaustively document my painting process in photos, written notes, and sometimes even video. This is partly so I can figure out what works and what doesn't, and partly so that I can bring supporters of my art along for the journey on [Patreon](#). You can find a few past examples of these process write-ups and videos [on my website](#).

What's your experience of Dungeons & Dragons?

I'm one of those rare fantasy artists who wasn't drawn into the

profession through any kind of fandom, just a love of painting weird and fantastical things. It's a happy coincidence that the subject matter I enjoy painting lines up so well with the imagery in properties such as D&D and *Magic: The Gathering*. These pastimes are heavily illustrated, exposing gamers to a lot more art than the general public, so there's a big crossover between gaming and art appreciation. The love of games really helps keep illustration alive.

You can see more of Wylie Beckert's work on her [official website](#) and connect with her on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Patreon](#).

***Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* releases November 17, 2020 with an MSRP of \$49.99 and is available to [preorder now](#).**

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IN THE WORKS



PREVIEWS

IN THE WORKS



Tasha's Cauldron of Everything

by Matt Chapman



(Select to view)

Hold onto those tiny tarts and wave a feather* in the air, the world's greatest roleplaying game is about to reintroduce a bona fide superstar. In much the same way that *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* made the beholder crime lord a household name, *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* will push the eponymous wizard into the modern D&D A-list.

“Most people know Tasha because of her spell *Tasha's hideous laughter*, which is in the *Player's Handbook*. But many people don't

know that Tasha is one of the most storied characters in the D&D multiverse,” project lead Jeremy Crawford tells *Dragon+*. “You know right away Tasha is an exceptional figure because she was raised by *the* Baba Yaga, who is an amazingly powerful hag. Tasha ends up rubbing shoulders with many of the luminaries in the world of Greyhawk, including being a frenemy of Mordenkainen.

“In time, Tasha becomes a queen and is dubbed the ‘Witch Queen’, before eventually becoming a demigod-like figure. In that transformation she adopts the name Iggwilv, which is associated with the *Demonomicon* that bears her name. There are all sorts of stories from D&D history that centre on her.”

Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything focuses on the wizard before her Iggwilv transformation, with some input from her time as the Witch Queen. In the same way that the Xanathar gave opinions throughout *Xanathar’s Guide to Everything*, readers will find out what this wizard thinks about the character options, artifacts, sidekicks, group patrons, and puzzles, as she passes judgement on the book’s content.

And similar to *Xanathar’s Guide*, *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* is a culmination of over a year’s worth of *Unearthed Arcana*, while also bringing together the best game mechanics from a number of other D&D books. The book’s four chapters cover various character options (“The longest chapter of the book,” Crawford reveals); group patrons; magic items and spells; and a chapter exclusively for Dungeon Masters.

“People who are familiar with *Xanathar’s Guide* will feel like they’re looking at the sibling of that book, but at the same time *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* is very much its own thing. It has some of the same types of content found in *Xanathar’s Guide*, such as new subclasses, but includes plenty of new content.

“Players and DMs will find new artifacts and non-common magic items, including the magic tattoos from *Unearthed Arcana*. The book also includes the official implementation of the rules for sidekicks, following the version that appeared in the *Dungeons & Dragons Essentials Kit*. And there are a number of readymade puzzles for DMs to drop into their campaigns,” Crawford says, before promising that the star of the show will be visible throughout.

“For *Xanathar's Guide*, art of the beholder appeared on the cover and then in the introduction, and that was pretty much it. In *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* we get to see Tasha in the full-page paintings that open every chapter, showing the different stages of her life. It's a beautiful book.”

CUSTOMIZING YOUR ORIGIN

“*Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* includes a new way to customize your character's origin. This rule allows you to take the ability score bonuses of your race and apply them however you like, based on the origin that you imagined for your character. The same rule also provides guidelines on changing certain other elements of your race. It's all about digging into the fact that adventurers are exceptional. The race options as written in the *Player's Handbook* are Western high-fantasy archetypes. If you want your character's backstory to diverge from that archetype in significant ways, there are now some very simple rules to make those changes. Many players embrace these high fantasy archetypes. Yet for other players, having their character differ from the archetype is what draws them to that character. And we want to make sure that our rules make it just as possible to take that path as to follow the archetype.”

ARTIFICER CLASS

“The artificer class appeared in *Eberron: Rising from the Last War* and was written very much to be a part of that world. In *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* we make it easily accessible for any D&D setting. In the process, we've added a fourth subclass, the armorer, as well as some new artificer infusions. I think players and DMs are really going to enjoy the new art we commissioned for the class, especially the amazingly adorable homunculi.”

CLASS FEATURE VARIANTS

“No other *Unearthed Arcana* published for fifth edition has been as popular as the one we created for **Class Feature Variants**. It was so positive, in fact, that most of those options have made it into the book. Some of that material has been refined in a variety of ways, but it's all going to be recognizable. On top of that, *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* includes some additional options that were designed since that *Unearthed Arcana* was published. I think there are going to be some really delightful surprises. This book also contains a new version of the blade singer from the *Sword Coast Adventurer's*

Guide.”



“Players and DMs love extra options and packing those into *Xanathar’s Guide to Everything* and *Volo’s Guide to Monsters* made them both instant hits with the community. *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* looks set to do the same.”

GROUP PATRONS

“In *Eberron: Rising from the Last War* we introduced the concept of a group having a patron. We’ve taken that notion and fleshed it out so that it works for any D&D setting by providing broad categories that are not Eberron specific. For example, Eberron used a newspaper as one of the group patron options, but not all D&D worlds have newspapers. There’s still a little bit of overlap in the patron lineup—Eberron had an academic institution as an option and in this book we have the academy—but we needed to explore a set of patrons that would work no matter where your adventures take place. *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* also provides a special feature for parties which decide to serve a group patron. Because of their common bond, the party members are able to give each other advantage on checks a certain number of times per day, for a little extra oomph.”

SIDEKICKS

“The playtest feedback on sidekicks was very clear: a) people love them; and b) they would like them to be even simpler. For those reasons we have really leaned into making sidekicks as simple as possible. The sidekick rules allow players to build an NPC who joins the party. This is done by taking a stat block with a low challenge rating and applying a sidekick class to it. A DM might also use these rules to create an NPC they control who doesn’t necessarily follow around the adventuring group. There’s a tremendous amount of flexibility.”

ARTIFACTS

“*Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* has a fun selection of artifacts. Some are classic artifacts returning to the game, alongside a few brand-new items. It would have been remiss of us not to include the *Demonomicon of Iggrwilv*. We also bring back the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-O* and the *Crook of Rao*. One new item is an artifact version of the Tarokka deck. This deck has been used to capture beings of evil. The risk associated with using its powers is that the spirits trapped inside might escape and then you may have to go and recapture them. That’s a great example of how the best artifacts can also be powerful plot devices, generating adventure in addition to being a reward.”

SUPERNATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

“*Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* also includes a section of amazing magical environments. We thought it would be a lot of fun to design a number of areas that have been transformed by magic in various ways. For instance, these environments might be enchanted springs or magic trees, and we’ve created a whole region that’s haunted by ghosts, as well as another region where magic itself has started to unravel. We delve into them in detail, giving DMs guidelines on how these sorts of phenomena can function in a campaign. My favorite art in the book is in that section.”

PUZZLES

“Puzzles have always been an element in D&D. Some DMs are great at coming up with them and some have a challenging time creating engaging puzzles. With that in mind, we’ve created ready to go puzzles that can be dropped into almost any adventure. These are designed to give your players a change of pace by presenting a new type of problem that needs to be solved with a different type of teamwork. To pull this off, we partnered with **Elisa Teague**, who is an amazing puzzle designer. She wrote all of the puzzles that appear in this section, which is in the chapter for Dungeon Masters.”

***Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* releases November 17, 2020 with an MSRP of \$49.99 and is available to **preorder now**.**

* These are the material components of the spell *Tasha’s hideous laughter*.



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IN THE WORKS



The Great Dalmuti

When Richard Garfield created *The Great Dalmuti* card game back in 1995, he drew inspiration from further back in history. *Dalmuti* (which sees four-to-eight players trading ranked cards as they attempt to get rid of their hands) is a variant of the public domain game *President* and dates all the way back to the Middle-Ages. Aside from a 1998 spinoff based on the comic strip *Dilbert* (titled *Dilbert: Corporate Shuffle*), no-one has updated Garfield’s creation since. But on its 25th anniversary, this card-swapping, status-changing game extends its long history once more thanks to a version that merges with the rich world of Dungeons & Dragons. Illustrator Harry Conway—whose artistic style often plays with the perspective of his characters, elongating them and showing heads and limbs out of proportion—got the call to update the artwork for the rerelease and was immediately intrigued.

“Getting that message was one of those very surreal and exciting moments in an artist’s life. Being asked by Senior Creative Art Director Shauna Narciso to revamp something that’s 25 years old and give it a fresh coat of paint was amazing enough. But being tasked with taking this classic mediaeval card game filled with very cool characters and incorporating iconic D&D elements into it was an opportunity that I definitely couldn’t pass up,” Conway tells *Dragon+* from his home in Ireland.



(Select to view)

“I was as intimidated as I was excited to be involved in this project because I’ve never created art for a card game before. *The Great Dalmuti* has a tarot card feel to it, and when I researched the 1995 game I found that Margaret Organ-Kean had illustrated those original cards. Our art styles are leagues apart from one other and it’s interesting to now be able to look at the two and compare them.”

The artist received a breakdown of each character he needed to create, including their specific race. Certain characters from the original game had also been reimaged for the D&D multiverse, such as the transformation of the Archbishop into the illithid Mind Minister.

“It was interesting to combine those two elements together. And in the descriptions that Shauna had laid out for me, there was enough free rein to do my own thing. My style is all about shape and building strong silhouettes when it comes to creating characters,” he explains.

“The brief also gave an idea of the world the character is in. If you look at the original card game, those backgrounds are very detailed and highly rendered. I subscribe to the philosophy that less is more so I only wanted to give players a suggestion of that world. It’s an element of each of those characters that extends beyond them into the background, but not in a way that’s distracting.”

Creating a backstory for each character also helped Conway bring them to life. For example, he pictured the Breeder as someone with a laborious and frustrating job as she tries to raise abyssal chickens.

“I tried to capture the inner expression that these cheeky little monsters know that they’re wrecking her head—and they have no problem in doing so! It’s become a nightmare for the Breeder but that’s her job, so she has to suck it up and get on with it,” he explains.

“And I like the idea that the Rat Catcher has an audience. He’s someone that lives his life surrounded by rats and he’s found a way of entertaining himself with their presence. My intention in that scene is to show the sense of disbelief from the rats. They don’t know what the rat catcher has in store for them, so they look bewildered and discombobulated.”

The artist also attempted to answer the question: what’s so “Great” about The Great Dalmuti? His interpretation of that card suggests the pursuit of the crown has an underlying sinister quality to it.

“I felt it would be like Smeagol with the precious. There’s a desperation in trying to obtain it and it was really important to get that across with this mass of hands reaching out in hope.”

***The Great Dalmuti: Dungeons & Dragons* releases November 17, 2020 with an MSRP of \$14.99 and is available to **preorder now**. You can find more art from Harry Conway on his **official website** and connect with him on **Instagram**.**

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IN THE WORKS



Curse of Strahd Revamped

by Matt Chapman

When your name is Count Strahd von Zarovich, you come to expect a second chance at life. Originally inspired by “random encounter number thirty-four: a vampire” in **co-creator Tracy Hickman’s home game**, this Barovian noble was fully fleshed out for the AD&D module *I6: Ravenloft*. A sequel (*Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill*) followed in 1986, and the character received his own campaign setting (*Ravenloft: Realm of Terror*) in 1990, before being revived once more in the 2016 D&D fifth edition release *Curse of Strahd*. Now the vampiric villain rises again as *Curse of Strahd* gets both an update and an upgrade....



(Select to view)

“We wanted to flex our muscles a little and see what we could do production-wise to deliver an experience that people would adore,” says D&D Lead Story Designer Chris Perkins, who took charge of *Curse of Strahd*’s second entry into fifth edition.

“Players will know that the campaign leverages the **Tarokka deck**, which is a set of cards used for fortune telling. We can’t ordinarily include a deck of cards with a book, so you’d usually have to buy that separately. But we could create a box as a reason to put those two things together to give players the whole experience as it was meant to be. And if you’re going to make a box for *Curse of Strahd*, it has to be a coffin.”

DEAD RISING

“The box is big, there’s no getting around that. But it had to be wide enough and tall enough for the full-size sourcebook to fit in. And that leaves room for other paraphernalia,” Perkins adds, saying that the fun really began when the team started discussing what else might appear alongside the Tarokka deck to enhance the experience.



(Select to view)

“We took the text and broke it up into three separate pieces. The adventure is still intact but it made sense to put the monsters into a separate booklet. That way the DM can be running the adventure with the book open and not have to flip back and forth to use the monster stats.”

A new Dungeon Master’s screen features Strahd-themed art (created by **CoupleofKooks**) on the outside and adventure-specific content on the inside. A set of special postcards has also been commissioned.

“The poster map is made out of a more durable material so that it doesn’t rip when it’s folded repeatedly,” Perkins reveals. “And I

think people will really dig these fun Barovian postcards we've included. They're nice little tchotchkes, but they also serve a practical purpose. They have Barovian art on one side and space to write letters or notes on the other as a way for DMs to invite players to their game. There are four distinct postcards and we've got three copies of each in the box."



"*Ravenloft* is an absolute classic. I loved DMing it the first time in the '80s and I was super excited to return to the castle in *Curse of Strahd* in 2016. The beautiful touches in this box set—from the portrait of Strahd in his coffin to the monster booklet—provide new reasons to revisit Barovia and enjoy the gothic horror."

ALL THE FIXINGS

New, exclusive art and a Tarokka deck aren't the only bonuses hidden within *Curse of Strahd*'s new casket-like exterior. The D&D Team also took the opportunity to make a few small changes to the adventure itself, incorporating errata that players have discovered over the years. While this didn't involve any major structural changes or heavy rewrites, it did include a number of finely tuned improvements throughout the book.

"We catalogue new things as they come to light and we had received feedback on the depiction of the Vistani in *Curse of Strahd*. It's important to the team as a whole that we think of these issues as part of an ongoing conversation and address them at the first available opportunity," Perkins tells *Dragon+*.

"We also addressed some sensitivity concerns about the depiction of one of the central characters, Vistani vampire hunter Ezmerelda d'Avenir. Ezmerelda has an artificial leg and the original text says that she hides it. That not only says something about how this character thinks of disabilities, it was also inconsistent with the art in the book because we can see her artificial leg plain as day. We had to

change that for both reasons.

“I like those conversations and that we’re able to surgically go into the adventure and address those concerns. I like that our adventures are not set in stone and that we can make conscientious adjustments. All the changes that we’re making to this version of the adventure will also echo in future reprintings of the book itself.”

DIRT NAP

Fans may recognize the distinctive style of the artwork on the front of the coffin, as artist Hydro74 has created a number of alternative covers for Dungeons & Dragons products (as well as the **cover for *Dragon+ #2***). Yet Perkins has one final surprise for players and DMs when they open up that box.

“The first thing that you see when you take the lid off is a full-size painting of Strahd lying in the dirt. We wanted to create the experience of seeing this vampire sleeping in the coffin when someone opens it,” Perkins says. “And on the reverse side of that image we put Strahd’s stat block so you always have easy access to it when you need it.”

***Curse of Strahd Revamped* releases October 20, 2020 with an MSRP of \$99.99 and is available to **preorder now**.**

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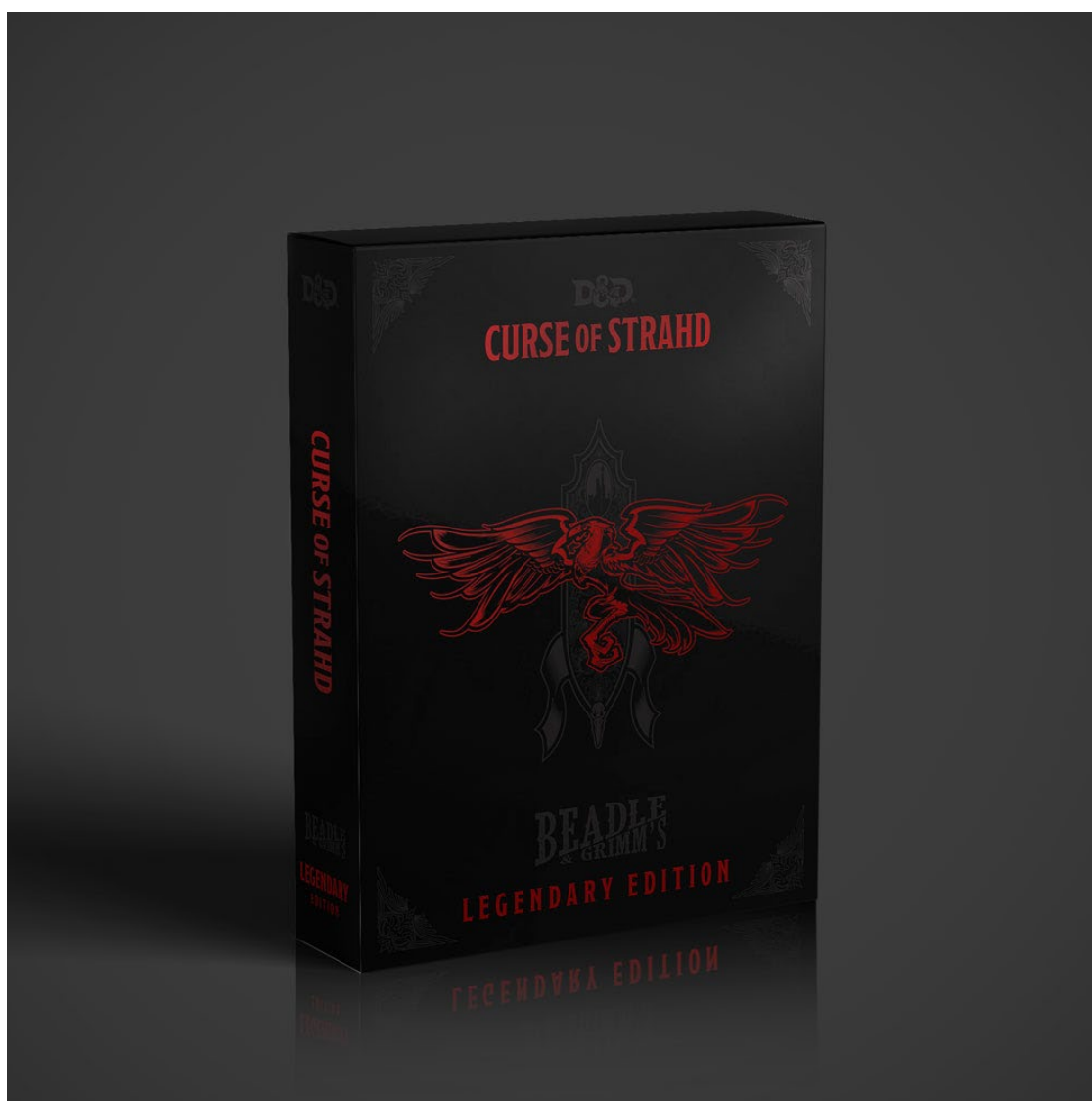
IN THE WORKS



Beadle and Grimm's Curse of Strahd Legendary Edition

by Matt Chapman

The cacophony of hammering, the crash of raw materials, the occasional squeal in goblin tongue (“The whippings will continue until morale improves,” the Supreme Marketing Goblin tells *Dragon+*) has now been heard for more than three years at Beadle & Grimm’s Pandemonium Warehouse. During this time we’ve seen numerous **Silver**, **Gold**, and **Platinum** editions of major Dungeons & Dragons storylines roll off the company’s assembly line, augmenting those D&D releases, with a new “Legendary” edition now joining those ranks.



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“The way it usually works is that we’re up against the clock, because the D&D Team is still working on its thing. It’s amazing to watch that creative process come together but at the same time we’re also trying to calculate what our customers want from a box. Where’s the big win for the DM? And you can only really start to deliver on those things once the storyline has been locked down,” says Matthew Lillard, co-founder of Beadle & Grimm’s Pandemonium Warehouse.

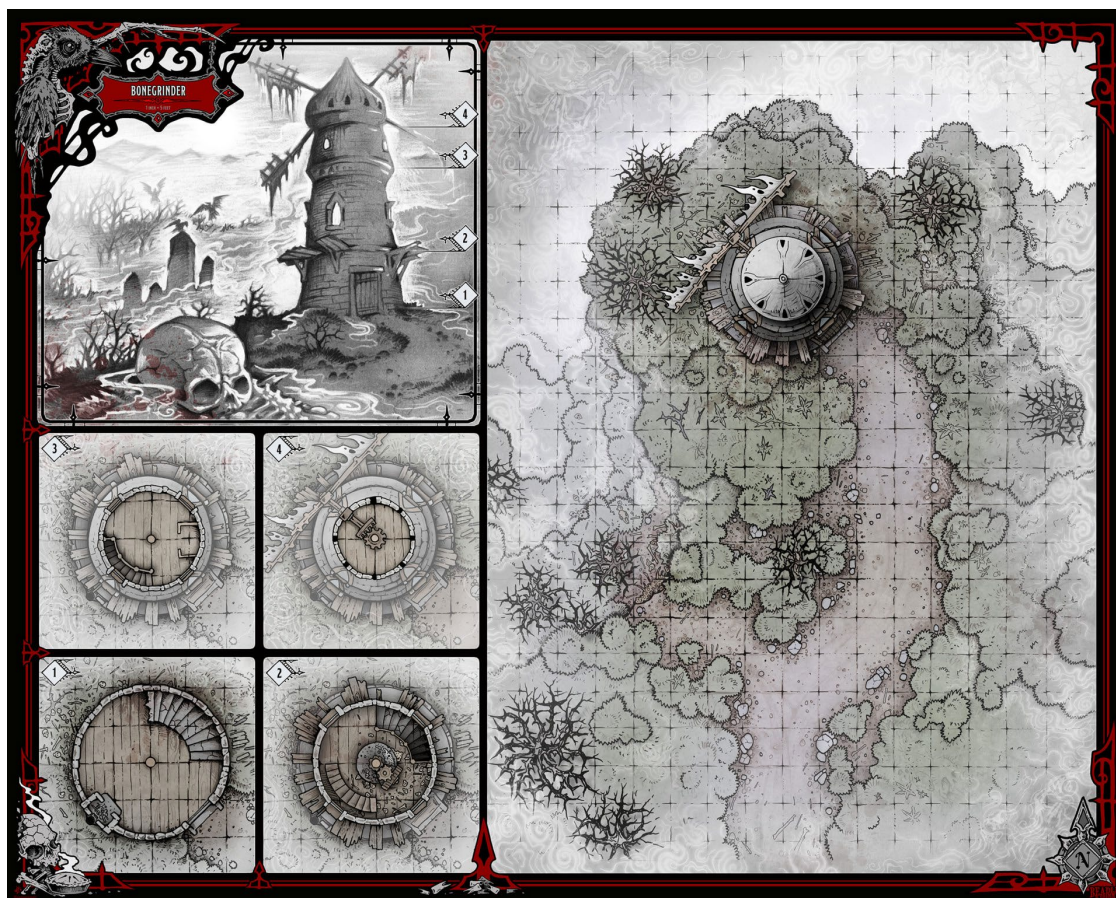
“Some of the elements we include come from vendors who have long lead times, so you have to start concerning yourself with what’s going to be in a box before you know if that element is going to remain in the adventure. At some point we have to take a leap of faith. But *Curse of Strahd* is already out there. When they told us it was going to be rereleased, it was an opportunity for us to do something we had never done before.”

Ordinarily, the Beadle & Grimm's team would begin breaking down a new adventure the second it lands on their desk. The only problem with that approach is that if everyone in the company is reading it, the adventure's automatically been spoiled for them! Yet because Lillard's long-running home game traditionally uses homebrew, none of the five members had ever set foot in Castle Ravenloft.

“To be able to go back and play a vintage adventure that none of us had played before was really nice. It gave us a chance as five friends to indulge in the story and enjoy the game. It also gave us new insights as to what our players might want before we even started building this box.”

BATTLE MAPS

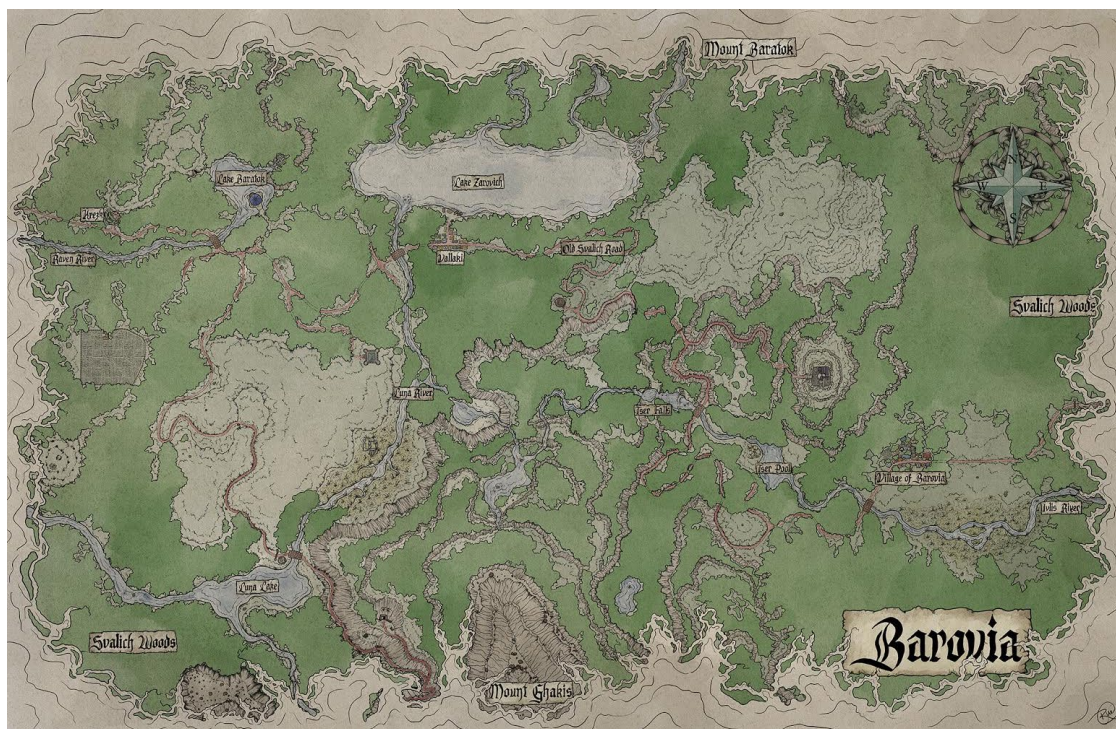
One of the elements the team is most proud of in the *Curse of Strahd Legendary Edition* is its maps. Beadle & Grimm's premium boxes have become known for their large battle maps, which feature a one-inch grid to support battles using standard miniatures. The initial plan was to recreate the catacombs beneath Strahd's lair, but cartographer Jack Badashski had the ambition to try and map out every area of Castle Ravenloft where player characters might battle Count Strahd von Zarovich.



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“Ravenloft is an iconic property but it’s also immense. Trying to maintain the integrity of that one-inch battle grid is almost impossible because the map that would be created is so large. Jack started to build the crypts beneath the castle because there’s a good chance we’ll see combat there. But what if your final encounter with Strahd takes place in the library upstairs?” Lillard asks.

“Our cartographer loved the property and really enjoyed what he was working on and suggested he create the whole thing. He ended up spending a couple of months building out this battle map, which includes all of the floors in Castle Ravenloft. It felt like a defining moment for him in his career. And if you’re able to lay out the entire thing, your players are going to lose their minds.”



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The result is seventeen 34-inch by 40-inch battle maps that include every aspect of Strahd's castle. Lillard describes this part of the production as a "huge physical commitment" that includes the creation of a tube specifically to hold these multiple sheets. Not content with that achievement, the team has also broken Mike Schley's maps (such as the town of Vallaki) out of the adventure and blown them up on 8.5-inch by 11-inch cardstock as an aid for Dungeon Masters. DMs will also be able to hand their players a new in-world map of Barovia, which rolls up as a piece of Hyde-like paper.



"Every Dungeon Master dreams of using incredible props in their game and this Beadle & Grimm's Legendary Edition would make an incredible Halloween gift for your favorite DM."

PUPPET MASTER

There are plenty of other high-end goodies inside the *Legendary Edition*. As well as a custom Dungeon Master's screen, sixty encounter cards, a set of five Strahd-focused player characters and four bonus playable encounters, it simply wouldn't be *Curse of Strahd* without a Tarokka deck. The adventure itself has also been broken up into individual books to make it easier to navigate.

“Our goal is to make the gaming experience around the table as incredible as possible. We always try to find something that's a little outside the box, no pun intended,” Lillard jokes, referring back the **Platinum Edition of Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus**, which adorably introduced a plushie version of Lulu the hollyphant to the gaming table to help bring them to life.

“In that vein, we are creating five **Blinsky** finger puppets inspired by the toy store the players find in the adventure—including the faceless bride and the werewolf. We've also made the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind as a big, heavy, wearable item. We put a lot of time and effort into making that feel right and to give it the heft it needs.

“And we've minted the coins that the Barovians use with the visage of Strahd on the front of them, based on a bust image artist Sidharth Chaturvedi created for us. Those coins are bigger than our dragon coin and there'll be three of them in the box.”

FAN-FAVORITE

“We've obviously known about the *Curse of Strahd* rerelease for some time now and we were dying for the announcement to take place so we could talk about it. When we told people about our **Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden Platinum Edition** we had nothing to show anyone. Strahd is the first time we've had some of those elements available to us when we talk about the box for the first time,” Lillard reveals.

“Every time we've encountered a fan of our boxes or met new people at a con, everyone has asked, when are you going to do *Curse of Strahd*? To finally be able to deliver a Ravenloft-themed box is really exciting.”

Beadle & Grimm's *Curse of Strahd Legendary Edition* releases in

**the fall of 2020 with an MSRP of \$349, and is available to
preorder now.**



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kitchen table, see the garden as a fantastical labyrinth, and play ghoulish gatekeeper to the treasures under the bed. They're ideal D&D party members.

There are already a number of ways to bring the world of D&D to kids. From the *Young Adventurer's Guide* series and the *ABCs* and *123s* books to the *Stranger Things D&D Starter Set* and *Dungeon Mayhem* card game, these brilliant resources help pique the interest of those still young enough to see dragons in the shadows on their bedroom walls. New board game *Adventure Begins* aims to add to their draw.

Adventure Begins ingeniously condenses the key elements and character classes of fifth edition D&D into a tabletop board game. Its easy setup and quick gameplay make even quite young children feel right at home, giving grown-up fans a chance to play D&D with the whole family.

“There’s a huge audience of parents who love D&D, and they’re looking for ways to play with their seven, eight, nine, and ten-year-olds,” says Game Designer Allie Jennings, who says the feedback was terrific when early versions of *Adventure Begins* were tested with families. “They were really excited. The game introduced D&D concepts and core tenets at a much-simplified level so that they’re able to play the game they love with all the members of their family.”

How the Game Works

Adventure Begins is a collaborative journey, which lays out like a tabletop board game. Players take turns to place tiles in a path, like pieces of a puzzle, as they weave stories and overcome challenges.

“You start at the beginning of that path,” Jennings explains, “and on each turn you work together as a team to move forward along it, uncovering adventures and encountering monsters to battle. When you finally reach the end of the board you take on—and hopefully defeat!—the final monster, which might be one of four creatures.”

It takes around an hour of gameplay to reach that ending and the monsters, characters, and adventures you experience along the way will all be familiar to D&D players. “For our final monsters we have the kraken, a fire giant, a beholder, and a green dragon—because you can’t have D&D without a dragon,” says Brand Writer Jenna

Giuffrida. “They all have their own names and storylines, plus their own three little minions that you will encounter along the way.”



Players have the choice of taking on the quest as red dragonborn rogue Korinn Nemmonis, human sorcerer Kiya Astorio, dwarf fighter Ris Strongheart or elf bard Thia Silverfrond. D&D players have always embodied the characters they create and *Adventure Begins* encourages that same level of immersion by allowing players to develop the personalities of these four heroes.

“One of our goals was to really simplify character creation and remove the math,” says Giuffrida. “We split a character’s traits into

three tiles, which you choose between as you're building your character and slide into this cool little tracker. You can choose weapons and also get a special skill that ties into your personality. We tried to pull on archetypes, race, class, and all the core elements of D&D."

By choosing different options each time you play, characters—like the paths they take across the board—can end up being different every playthrough. "Not only do you have four separate storylines you can choose from as you're playing, but even when you replay those storylines it can feel like a different experience with different characters each time," says Jennings.



"I first played D&D way back in 1980 aged twelve, and quickly had to learn to be the DM. In comparison, my kids started playing as early as age five. These aids for younger players are magical for their ability to make the game as approachable as possible, especially when helping mold new Dungeon Masters. D&D sparks the creativity of young

minds and promotes cooperation over competition, while also reinforcing basic math skills and encouraging reading—all things most parents try and encourage."

Who Gets To Be the DM?

Adventure Begins also allows everyone to try their hand at being the Dungeon Master, albeit it in a modified role. The game can be played with one DM throughout, if very young players aren't confident readers. But if everyone takes a turn at being the DM, Giuffrida says they usually discover that they love it.

"Being Dungeon Master can seem like a lot of responsibility so we split it up and let every player have a chance to be the DM, taking turns. When you're the DM, you get to be the monster and roll the dice for it. You also get to know all the secret information that the

other players don't know yet. All of the players can then experience these elements of what makes being a DM fun, without the pressure of doing it for the whole game," Giuffrida says.

"We found that younger players really enjoyed DMing because the cards do all of the hard work for you. The top of each card has a little piece of story text that adds some flavor and atmosphere—they simply roll the dice and do all the fun parts.

"The kids really latched onto that, because being DM allows them to be storytellers. They can be as creative as they want to in this game, and it's also structured so it doesn't *require* them to be creative at all. If players prefer to just to battle the monsters, they can play that way too and still have a fun time."

The Power of Imagination

To make it as easy as possible for players to weave their tales, they draw from a deck of cards each turn and use the snippets provided there to drive the story along and help them to decide what to do.

"The card might be a trap or an earthquake," Jennings says. "The players then look at their character and their backpack full of items, and then creatively figure out how they're going to deal with the situation as a party."

As they progress across the board towards their goal, players get gold tokens for coming up with the kookiest stories for getting out of situations. The further (and sillier) a player can push their story, the better chance they have of reaching and defeating a monster. While that perfectly fits kids' sense of humor and taps into their zany imaginations, there are also plenty of cultural references and gags to keep grown-ups hooked.

"Kids are incredible storytellers, and they're silly. The goofy things we've heard them come up with while playing this game are constantly entertaining. We wanted them to understand that it's okay to come up with stories, and be wacky about it," says Jennings.

"D&D is about storytelling and creative problem solving, and those elements aren't often present in games for a younger age group. We're not only encouraging both of those, we actively reward them in the game."

Adventure Begins releases October 1, 2020 with an MSRP of \$24.99. It is available to preorder from [Hasbro Pulse](#), [Walmart](#), [Amazon](#), [Entertainment Earth](#), and [Big Bad Toy Store](#) in the US and from [Indigo](#) and [EB Games](#) in Canada.

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IN THE WORKS



Cutie Marks & Dragons

by Virginia Page



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If you thought we were finished with incredible crossovers this issue, having showcased Harry's Conway's art for *The Great Dalmuti: Dungeons & Dragons*, you're mistaken. The *My Little Pony x Dungeons & Dragons Crossover Collection* connected teams in Washington and Rhode Island for a collaboration that goes right to the heart of both franchises.

“Keeping in mind that we wanted to create a band of good friends out on an adventure, we realized that both fandoms have very strong roots in one key kind of magic: friendship!” says Designer Katie Smith, who was tasked with choosing the classes for each pony and giving them their own individual personalities.

“Emi Tanji on the D&D Team was a huge help when it came to deciding which classes would be a good fit to create a balanced party. She gave me a guide for each class, and I had a blast creating pony-style gear for them. That included what items they would be carrying, the kind of fabric and armor they would wear, and how they would wear them. I also spent time thinking about their personalities and deciding what colors they would be. Working together with Emi was like creating five characters at once for a cross-continental D&D campaign!”

CLASS PARTICIPATION

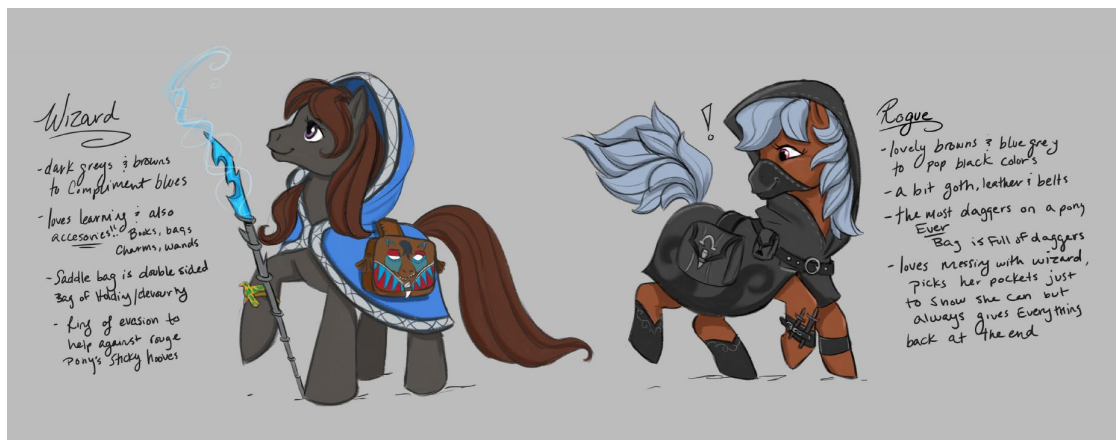
Showcasing the mix of adventure and magic that’s shared between the two universes, these characters enchantingly bring to life five of the core D&D classes. Wizard Mysteria, rogue Shadow Star, bard Spinner Talltail, druid Woodheart the Kind, and barbarian Valor Stronghoof make up the equestrian adventuring party. In true D&D character-building fashion, everything from the names of the ponies, the accessories they come with, and the story of how they relate to each other was carefully considered.



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“*My Little Pony* Brand Writer Grace Morgan crafted the names for these characters, with help from intern at the time Adam Wigley and in collaboration with Adam Lee on the D&D Team. Since *Dungeons & Dragons* and *My Little Pony* are already heavily tied to magic and

lore, the names easily fitted both fandoms. I shared with Grace our ideas for the ponies' personalities and their relationships, and she and her team took it from there," Smith tells *Dragon+*.



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“Building character backgrounds is a part of what makes D&D so much fun to play, so it was fitting to incorporate that aspect into the creation of these characters. For example, our wizard Mysteria has a saddle bag with a *bag of holding* on one side and a *bag of devouring* on the other—ponified versions, of course! I was imagining Shadow Star, the rogue, might keep trying to steal from Mysteria and that lead to us giving the wizard one of each type, giving Shadow a fifty/fifty shot of being successful or being sucked into the bag’s void,” Smith says with a laugh, adding that not every detail made it into the final designs.



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“We wanted our druid, Woodheart, to keep her buddy Littleknight the almiraj in her bag. I imaged Woodheart and Valor the barbarian to be close as well, with Valor bringing treats for Littleknight, although that character development didn’t make it into the physical product.”

SCREEN STARS

The *Cutie Marks & Dragons* collection didn't stop at creating fantastically designed mashup figures. It also features two staple D&D accessories: a Dungeon Master's screen, and a d20 dice.

"The d20 is pink, glittery, and oversized. It's so pretty! It perfectly matches the original *My Little Pony* D&D Dice collection created in 2017, and I have to thank my engineering partner Megan Faulkner-Crowe for that being so beautiful," Smith says. "The iconic dragon ampersand is the perfect touch to tie the two fandoms together, and Megan made sure the official D&D symbol is on the highest value side of the die."

That matchup continues on the DM screen, which features character art created by Leesha Hannigan (with art direction by the *My Little Pony* Creative Team) on both sides.

"When creating the DM screen, we really wanted to showcase these wonderful characters we had all come to adore. We fell in love with Leesha's illustrations and she did a fantastic job bringing our friends to life!" Smith says. "The inner part of the screen includes a character bio for each pony, written by Grace and the team. I hope these become jumping off points for players to spin-off their own tales. I would love to see what adventures these ponies have next."

UNI PERSPECTIVE

Aside from the magical nature of both worlds, nostalgia also helped provide inspiration during the creative process. The pony sculpts themselves reference the *My Little Pony* and D&D cartoons that both aired in the '80s, as well as the original *MLP* watercolor package illustrations.



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“All of our *MLP* crossover collections have a small ‘stamp of approval’ on the side of the package. For this pack a special unicorn from the D&D ’80s cartoon has given us their ‘hoof’ of approval.”

Five ponies make up the current collection, leaving us to ponder which other D&D classes might join them?

“I would love to create a line of unicorns which are all magic-user classes, including a sorcerer and a warlock. Those would be so much fun to design!” Smith suggests. “Outside of the classes, it would also be interesting to explore other races and perhaps even creatures. What would a dragonborn pony look like? How about a beholder pony? And a mimic pony would be spooky, unless we could somehow combine it with Mimic the Twinkle-Eyed Pony. So many possibilities!”

***Cutie Marks & Dragons* releases October 1, 2020 and is available to preorder at **Hasbro Pulse** with an MSRP of \$59.99.**

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IN THE WORKS



Jada Toys Diecast Nano Metalfigs

by Oz Mills

Many and varied are the physical objects that have represented Dungeons & Dragons characters and creatures since the game first launched in 1974. Bottle caps, tokens, jellybeans, LEGO models and an array of random items have been helpful in populating our fantasy worlds over the years (not to mention the **dime store toys**, whose role led to their canonization in the game). If you're looking to ditch stand-ins and offer your players high-quality miniatures that feel weighty, diecast modelmaker Jada Toys has your back.



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“Ever since we launched our Nano Metalfigs line years ago, we’ve had people reach out to us and say, ‘You’ve gotta make D&D!’” says Brian Sun, Senior Marketing Manager at Jada Toys. “We’ve always known that community and how the roleplaying game is interesting to people of all ages. And we’re all collectors at heart so really this was inevitable.”

As this was Jada Toys’ first foray into the world of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the initial step was to brainstorm which figures would be developed. Sun (alongside Director of Product Development, Juhn Lim, and Senior Licensing Manager, Jason Richman) took advice from the experts on the D&D Team as suggestions went back and forth on which creatures and characters to immortalize.

“A lot of us had to learn about the individual characters, and the D&D Team helped us there,” says Sun, as Richman remembers the odd amusing misstep in those early discussions: “I recall we kept mentioning a character called Acererak, and I was pronouncing it wrong the whole time!”



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Acererak (“Split the name into two pieces, ‘Acere’ and ‘rak.’ That’s how we landed on the pronunciation ah-SAIR-ak,” explains Chris Perkins), the powerful archlich appearing on the front of the *Dungeon*

Master's Guide, hasn't made it into the range yet. But the Jada Toys team worked with artists who grew up on D&D to assemble a collection that includes a red dragon, a beholder, a mind flayer, drow ranger Drizzt, and *Baldur's Gate's* Minsc and Boo, alongside other various race and class combinations.

"Once an idea was approved, we'd begin drawing designs. We needed to be able to translate that character art into a real product. We often had to find a happy medium between what looks cool and what was realistic. For example, you can't have a character's weapon be too large or that giant sword might break off," Juhn explains.

"We quickly understood that it was not going to be possible to create an adult dragon because it would be much too big. Instead, we put our efforts into designing a young dragon which would be much more appropriately sized."

Jada Toys' range of D&D diecast miniatures are being released in "Starter" (\$4.99), "Medium" (\$9.99), and "Deluxe" (\$14.99) packs. Starter packs include four human-sized figures, Medium packs bring together four figures plus a medium-sized monster, while the Deluxe pack adds the young red dragon and four figures. In the first wave, the Medium pack includes a beholder, while a planned second wave will feature an ogre.



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“You might think we could now produce a range of similar dragons in different colors but the design of creatures in Dungeons & Dragons is very specific. This isn’t a generic, one-size-fits-all dragon you could find on any shelf. The design of the head and the horns are iconic and we think fans will appreciate that accuracy,” Juhn says, adding that plastic elements also helped the designers bring these creatures to life.



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“The beholder has a clear plastic stand that allows it to float above the other figures. And while the dragon has plastic wings, you’re going to realize it’s still a hefty piece of diecast.”

Whether these figures are used for play or kept on display as collectables, their quality gives them a distinct sheen.

“We make sure that the whole package has a cool look to it, and we often use metallic finishes to give the figures a premium feel.” says Juhn. “They’re still durable enough that you could toss them around, but they have that presence where if you shine a light on them on a shelf it’s going to be very eye-catching.”

Jada Toys’ Dungeons & Dragons Nano Metalfigs diecast miniatures are exclusively available at **Walmart, and on sale at additional retailers beginning January 2021.**

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IN THE WORKS



For Fans By Fans D&D Merchandise

by Matt Chapman

For Fans By Fans creates officially licensed gear for the people who love it the most. How can they be sure of this devotion? Well, the site runs regular competitions and asks artists to submit their work, with special guest judges picking the best designs to be put into production. It's a way of building a community that bridges the gap between fans, artists, and the worlds that inspire them.

Since this issue of *Dragon+* already features an abundance of cute and is stacked with artists of all kinds, we wanted to shine the spotlight on three For Fans By Fans creators whose Dungeons & Dragons designs are killing it more effectively than the rogue subclass Assassin. We chatted with **Christa D.** (A.K.A. Christa Diehl) about her adorable mini-pin set, **rozilla74** (A.K.A. Antony Rozwadowski) about his composite dragon ampersand logos, and **Quietsnooze** (A.K.A. Vanessa Stefaniuk) about her characterful dice bags.

CHRISTA D.

"I was introduced to the Forgotten Realms novels a long time before I knew they were D&D related. I used to work in security and one of the guys who was on the graveyard shift told me I had to read these books. I fell in love with them," says Christa Diehl, whose work on the For Fans By Fans website includes a **Battlehammer Brewery T-shirt**. "I love Bruenor and Catti-brie. They're fun and badass, but they also have their vulnerabilities."

“I’ve been playing D&D on and off for ten years. Our kids are fourteen and almost twelve so they honestly play more than I do at this point, and I usually spend a lot more time drawing. But we had a home game going for a little while and I was trying out a ranger class, which is what prompted me to make the **Hunter’s Mark design**.



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“The key to taking a creature and making it look cute and non-threatening is to focus on round shapes because it makes everything seem less dangerous in general. Round shapes and big eyes help give creatures personality. The **Cute But Deadly** beholder was my first submission to For Fans By Fans, and I realized I could go even rounder and use less detail to keep it very simple. The cutest form of most things is a baby and while babies are not very round, there’s a kitten-esque feel to the four creatures in my **Dungeons and Dragons Mini Pin Set**.

“I’ve been thinking about using the same style to create all of the playable races or character classes in D&D. But first I’m going to expand on the creatures and see where we go from there. There’s so much choice when it comes to D&D creatures so I’m trying to narrow it down. I’ve been asking all my friends who play D&D to

throw ideas at me. I want to know which creatures they don't want to fight and then make those creatures cute. And if the suggestion is already something cute like a flumph, it makes my job that much easier."

ROZILLA74

"The first design I created was an **Avengers logo** for a contest on the For Fans By Fans site. I took the four main characters and made them into the Avengers 'A' symbol. I ended up winning the competition, which was a great surprise," says artist rozilla74, also known as Antony Rozwadowski. "I realized I could do the same thing for multiple properties, and my signature style developed from there.



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"I'm a graphic designer by trade but I have an Associate Degree in Illustration, so I try to get that illustrative edge into my designs when I can. I'm a big fan of *Batman: The Animated Series* and how Bruce Timm simplified the characters, as well as admiring retro and art deco designs where everything is depicted in simple overlapping shapes and gradients. All of that influenced my original thinking.

"It's always a puzzle trying to create a logo using other component parts. You have to figure out which characters fit best. I've done a few Marvel and *Star Wars* logos but a lot of people have requested designs featuring DC characters. I've been playing around with a Batman logo that uses all of the different versions of Batman from the movies, television and cartoons.

"When For Fans By Fans was bringing out its Dungeons & Dragons range, I was commissioned to create **the ampersand logo** in a similar fashion. I've actually never played D&D even though I have lots of friends who are into it. But growing up I was always a big fan of the cartoon, so I knew all about the characters and creatures. I also love the Dungeons & Dragons logo, it's so striking. I did a lot of research on which creatures were the most popular and which might fit the

shape the best, and we went back and forth on which we'd include. When it was released it really took off and became one of the site's bestsellers.

"I'm always looking to improve upon concepts, so after the success of that first ampersand logo I went back and designed **another version**. I consulted a lot of my friends about which characters I should include. The response was that I should definitely include an owlbear and that I also had to get a giant in there."

QUIETSNOOZE

"I have dysautonomia, which keeps me in the house but obviously doesn't keep me from drawing. It makes me want to share the stories I'm passionate about, whether that's alone through my work or collaboratively with other people playing D&D, because that keeps me connected to everyone and makes me feel like I'm still out there living through characters," says Canadian artist Quietsnooze, also known as Vanessa Stefaniuk.

"As part of that I create a weekly web comic called *Radio Silence*. It's about a British rock band's rise to fame and follows them on the road as they experience life. The comic is coming up for a five-year anniversary, which is bittersweet. I worked on *Radio Silence* for four months before I launched it at a convention. While I was at the con I got sick and that's what caused the dysautonomia, so as long as my comic has been active I've had this disability. But at least I'm able to celebrate in some way. My comic has a tight-knit readership which is really sweet and many of them are also D&D fans. We set up a second Discord so everyone can talk about their characters and update people on their weekly games. It's great.



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“I’ve been playing D&D since college and I was briefly introduced to 3.5 before we played fourth edition. One of our professors ran a couple of games for students for two years and those culminated in a battle royale that pitched the two parties against each other. It was last character standing and we fought for something like twelve hours! I created a little comic called *Advanced Death Saves* that was an anthology of those characters who died. I’m sad to say that my team lost, but my character lives on through my art.

“The **Dragon’s Hoard Dice Bag** was a spur of the moment design when For Fans By Fans asked me if I had any ideas for a dice bag. I work a lot with plushies and I wondered how I could incorporate that into the design. I love dragons so my immediate thought was that it had to be related to them.

“I joke that it was a one-hit-wonder idea because the reception was so good. But I have obviously come up with other popular ideas since then. I actually designed all five chromatic dragons at the same time,

but we tested the waters with the red dragon because it's so iconic. The **blue dragon** is also now available.

“My original pitch for the **Gelatinous Cube Dice Bag** was squishy and had liquid inside of it, like those '90s pencil cases. I pitched that the floating pieces inside the goo could be confetti but it turned out that using liquid would have made the manufacture more difficult. We settled on printing those images on the plastic so this is the first time my artwork has been printed on something!

“I had a lot of fun trying to incorporate some of the more uncommon but still iconic races as victims of the gelatinous cube. You can see tiefling horns on there, as well as tusks that are from an orc or half-orc. In between the typical weaponry you might expect to see, I added a weapon from my favorite *Game of Thrones* character as an Easter egg for myself—that's Gendry's hammer with all those spikes on it.

“I have one of the Gelatinous Cube Dice Bags and I've put my minis inside. It's great because it looks like they're all stuck inside and are pre-melts before the cube dissolves them! I'm going to put that out on convention tables—when conventions are a thing again—to show that you can put things other than dice in there.

“I'm currently working on an owlbear plushie design that's super cute and will hopefully be available in October. It's round and squishy and I'm really excited about it. Another design that's currently available to vote for on the website is my **Banishment Dice Jail**. It's a round box with a little hole in the top where you can slam a dice inside. The design on the top is a symbol for the *banishment* spell so you feel like you're really removing it for however long, until you unzip the other side and release it.”

Dungeons & Dragons Mini Pin Set (\$15); Battlehammer Brewery T-shirt (\$25); Ampersand Mega Pin (\$15); Stylistic Ampersand: The Sequel Pullover Hoodie (\$50); Dragon's Hoard Dice Bag (\$25); Blue Dragon's Hoard Dice Bag (\$25); Gelatinous Cube Dice Bag (\$18). *Dragon+* readers can get 20% off all D&D merchandise using the code DRAGONPLUS2020 until midnight August 31, 2020.



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IN THE WORKS



Wizkids Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden Miniatures

The weather report was changeable ahead of *D&D Live 2020: Roll w/ Advantage*. Initial indications suggested that it would be frozen tundra as far as the eye could see thanks to the major new D&D storyline *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. Vee Mus’*e*, artist and WizKids’ new Social Media Marketer, gathered her **army of miniature painters and terrain builders** to capture the eternal storm.



(Select to view)

“WizKids had this great opportunity to create three different dioramas for *D&D Live* and asked me to come on board early to help out with that,” the terrain designer, miniature painter and professional DM tells *Dragon+*. “I made sure the painters had the miniatures as early as possible because I know how time consuming that process can be. The goal was that I would help other artists with the terrain build.

“We had ideas for three different setups with strategically placed miniatures to tie in with *Icewind Dale*. We were working on icy mountains, a lake area with piers and frozen boats, and tavern buildings with surrounding houses amid the snowy terrain.”

COLD NEW WORLD

Mus'e, who created YouTube tutorials under the name **The Crafting Muse**, quickly realized that the ice-covered world the dioramas needed to represent offered a new challenge for her team. The trick was in making everything appear icy using the right gloss and sheen, without pushing that look too far and turning a realistic setting into something too fantastic.

“Winter terrain is not something that’s created as often as a typical dungeon, tavern, or battlefield. There’s an art to capturing how it would look in reality and then shrinking that down to size. For starters, snow is not a default white. It can go from grey to blue to green to yellow to purple depending on the lighting, so you have to be very careful with the colors you’re using. One of our artists, Jake Noorman, was working on how to get realistic-looking snow and created something that was really close,” she says.



“If ever you needed to understand that Icewind Dale is fraught with danger, these figures bring that home. Even at a time when most of us are playing almost exclusively online, these miniatures spark imagination and bring life to the villains and non-player characters of a setting. Try this exercise to challenge yourself as a creator: open a

box and create a side quest using only the creatures and characters you find inside.”

“My other trained builder, Nikita Kieselowsky, is a set designer for livestreams and she was planning on using LEDs as a backdrop to try and add a Northern Lights effect. It would have danced across the background and immersed people in the eternal twilight of Icewind Dale’s storms.”

When the locked-down world we’re all currently living in froze live social events in a way the Frostmaiden herself might be envious of, WizKids’ diorama project was put on hold. Yet as *D&D Live 2020*:

Roll w/ Advantage pivoted in response and shifted its exclusive reveals and **A-list streams** online, the snowstorms cleared and visibility was restored.

“We were still able to get a good chunk of the miniatures painted up thanks to our artists, who were given the same color guides our factory is using for production. Those miniatures all came back looking spot on when compared to the pre-painted products you’ll be getting,” Mus’e remembers.

“There are so many cool, dynamic details about this winter attire. There are a variety of textures incorporated into these miniatures because of the different furs and materials that would be used to keep warm in such a cold place. Those little extra touches are unique for this environment.”



OFF LIMITS

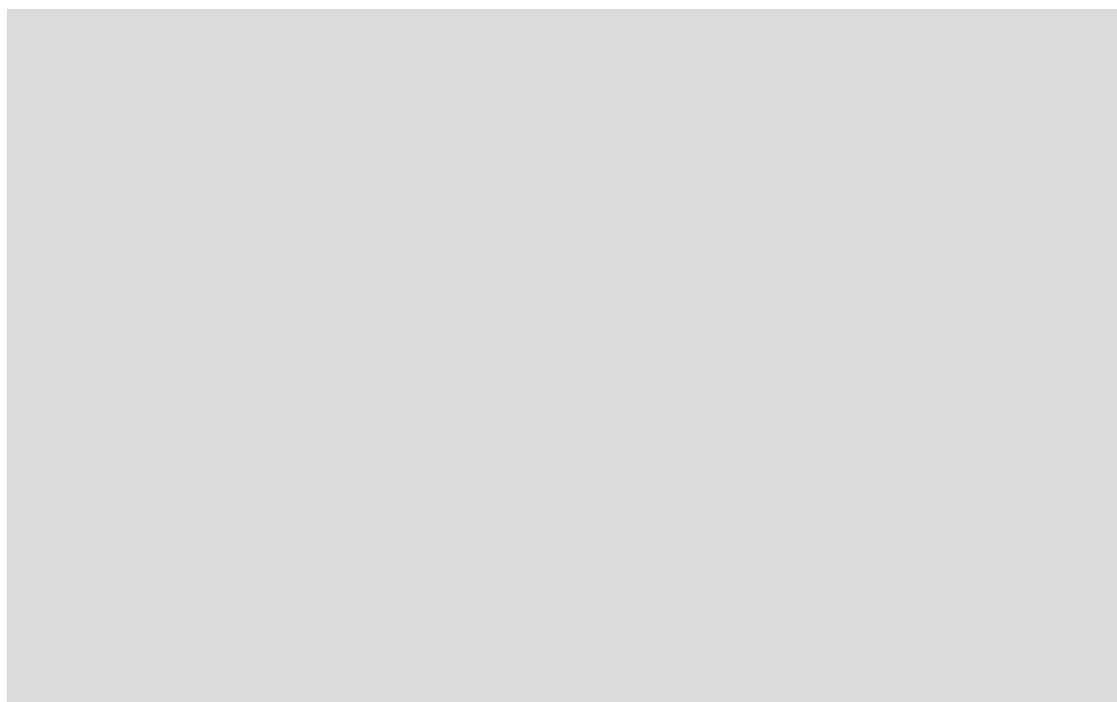
While the livestreamed version of *D&D Live 2020* showed off the first figures from **WizKids** upcoming *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* range, the full dioramas weren't so lucky. The break in

preparations caused by the pandemic was enough to stop elements such as the frozen lake and twinkling aurora borealis from reaching the audience they deserved.

“The terrain builders had created some scatter elements, so we had really cool items like logs that were covered in snow and wells that were iced over. But that was more window dressing for the dioramas and there was nothing there that we could feature in the showcase itself,” Mus’e says, revealing that the environment the figures appeared on in WizKids’ official photography (as seen on this page) came from her own collection.

“The terrain we used was something that nodded towards this very barren type of tundra environment. The funny thing is that it’s something I picked up at a yard sale. There were four pieces of it and it came from a train set collector who was moving and was clearing house. I quickly snagged it for my personal terrain collection because I really liked how it was done.”

Blind booster boxes of the D&D Icons of the Realms range (containing four random miniatures; one rare and three common or uncommon figures) are released in September 2020 with an MSRP of \$16.99 and can be pre-ordered at your local game store. The Premium Chardalyn Dragon is also released in fall 2020 with an MSRP of \$79.99.





LEGENDS OF BAROVIA

Will you serve him willingly, or plot his downfall? Enhance your *Curse of Strahd* table (or simply add these terrifying foes and legendary heroes to your collection) with WizKids' Icons of the Realms figures. Arriving October 2020, **pre-order now**.

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D&D Celebration 2020

An all-new live event makes expeditions to Icewind Dale even more memorable.

As the cold bites into your flesh like a snow-covered mimic; as the levels of exhaustion halve your hit points and reduce your movement to zero; as the pristine alabaster surface you were standing on turns the color of your blood; as the druid's animal companion starts to look like they'd make an excellent pair of mittens... we want you to remember that the Frostmaiden isn't all bad. After all, it's her presence in the D&D multiverse that has led to *D&D Celebration 2020*—an online gaming event open to fans all over the world!

If any year needs more D&D, it's this one. Running from Friday to Sunday September 18-20, 2020, *D&D Celebration* features tons of online Dungeons & Dragons gameplay with the D&D Adventurers League, liveplay streams, panels with D&D designers talking about the upcoming slate of products and the future of D&D, and community-led panels on a range of topics. As the *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* storyline kicks off all over the globe, it also hopes to bring together the largest gathering of D&D players ever assembled online.



(Select to view)

THE GREAT KNUCKLEHEAD RALLY

If you've played in a D&D Epic event before, you know what to expect. If this will be your first Epic, you'll join a table of other adventurers with an individual Dungeon Master much like any other game of D&D. Yet the decisions made by your group will impact the hopefully thousand-plus other players all tackling similar problems at their own tables.

“The ability for people to join virtually from anywhere on Earth is

really cool and we've never done it quite this scale before. We are hoping to run the largest D&D virtual tabletop game of all time," says Brandy Camel, Community Manager for Dungeons & Dragons.

"When I played in the *Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus* Epic event, we were all participating in the same race. And you heard people shouting across the room, updating their progress," she remembers. "I'm anticipating that experience being digitized in a live chat or as people share their experiences across social media. The actions each player takes will impact the final encounter for that game, which should be really exciting."

The Great Knucklehead Rally runs at 10am, 2pm, and 6pm PT on Saturday September 20, for three hours each session. As an adventure for characters levels 1-4 and the first Epic of the new D&D Adventurers League season, its story focuses on a fishing tournament that goes awry. Camel teases that the results from those three experiences might also have a direct impact on the wider D&D Adventurers League season.

Aside from Saturday's Epic adventure *The Great Knucklehead Rally*, gameplay will be available throughout the weekend. Shorter D&D Adventurers League games take place before and after the Epic, including mini-adventures from D&D Live 2020 on Friday and a new adventure debuting on Sunday!

COMMUNITY PANELS

There'll be plenty to enjoy beyond those snow-bound shenanigans. Chris Perkins and Jeremy Crawford will be on hand to provide an insider's look at upcoming D&D products, while other major luminaries will discuss the topics that they're most passionate about in panels run by the community for the community.

"There'll be liveplay games to watch, featuring influencers and streamers that you know and love, and we're hoping to be able to stream a table of special guests live from the Epic!" Camel shares, promising further news on the schedule in the coming weeks.

TICKETS

Events for *D&D Celebration* run from Friday to Sunday September 18-20, 2020. Tickets are on sale at the [Yawning Portal website](#) and cost \$5 each for the Friday and Sunday Adventurers League games, or \$10 each for Saturday's D&D Epic. All of the proceeds from ticket sales benefit the [Extra Life](#) charity and the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.



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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ADVENTURE BEGINS



CALLING ALL HEROES:
THE WORLD OF D&D AWAITS
IN THIS COOPERATIVE
FAMILY BOARDGAME

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D&D Classics

Although the Games of the 32nd Olympiad have been postponed, there are still numerous in-game sporting events for your characters to undertake!

by Bart Carroll

OLYMPIC SPIRIT

I love the Olympics (a bold statement, I know). I loved watching the 2016 Rio games with my son, delighted to share in the unique spectacle of friendly global competition. And had this year gone as originally scheduled, we would have just finished celebrating XXXII Olympic Games in Tokyo and be appreciating the 2020 Paralympics. As with every Olympics, I looked forward to watching all the wrestling (my favorite event), following the medal count, and marveling at new world records being set.

However, with the need for social distancing still very much in place, the Olympics/Paralympics have been postponed. But continuing in the Olympic spirit, we wanted to present games of a certain athleticism that may still be played around the virtual table.



The arena (Select to view)

***Mythic Odysseys of Theros* is available now with an MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your local game store, book stores such as Barnes & Noble, or online at retailers such as Amazon, or find a digital version at D&D Beyond, Fantasy Grounds, and Roll20. Plus, the *Encounters in Theros* companion supplement is also available now on the DMs Guild!**

Game of Giants
When it comes to the games of larger creatures, we actually covered this way back in *Dragon* issue #10. Our Halloween cover featured a hill giant pumpkin engaged in a horrifying game played by that race called “stuff-stuff”. Far more enjoyable (unless you’re a goat) is the goliath game of goat-ball. First featured in 2004’s *Races of Stone*, it reappears within *Icewind Dale: Rime of the*

Mythic Odysseys of Theros
What could be more Olympic than the recently released sourcebook whose tales dominated by gods, heroes, and monsters lie in the myths of ancient Greece? Included within *Mythic Odysseys of Theros* are details for arenas and competitions, an excerpt of which follows. Also look for the accompanying arena map on the following page.

DOWNLOAD PDF



Frostmaiden. Described as a sort of dodgeball played with a stuffed goat hide, *Rime of the*

(Select to view)

Frostmaiden includes updated rules and the opportunity for players to try their hand at the game against the goliaths of Wyrmdoom Crag. The book also includes stats for mountain goats... should a new goat-ball ever need to be “sourced”.

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***Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden* is a 320-page hardcover adventure with a double-sided poster map of Icewind Dale and Ten-Towns. It releases on September 15, 2020 with an MSRP of \$49.95 and is available to preorder now.**

How to Race a Dinosaur
Before we look back at owlbear racing below, there was a more recent—and more dangerous—version which appears in *Tomb of Annihilation*. When traveling to Chult, Port Nyanzaru offers plenty of distractions for visitors, including dinosaur racing! You can find the rules for racing, betting, and attacking with dinosaurs in the book—which of course also includes stats for zombie-spewing-tyrannosaur zombies! While only tangentially related (to dinosaurs), it’s worth looking back at issue #15’s inclusion of Tom Moldvay’s mini-game, Dino Wars!



(Select to view)

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***Tomb of Annihilation* is available now with an MSRP of \$49.95.**

Dungeon #91: Challenge of Champions by Jonathan M. Richards

Four Olympic-style challenges appeared in *Dungeon* magazine (issues #58, #69, #80, and #91 respectively). In each, various scenarios sponsored by the local Adventurers' Guild tested the capabilities of adventuring parties. In this fourth and final challenge, it doesn't matter how skilled you are—it's how you function as a team!



(Select to view)

This challenge appeared in the March/April 2002 issue, yet its ten scenarios can easily be repurposed for fifth edition campaigns. In addition, check out any number of the offerings at the DMs Guild featuring fiendish **puzzles**, **challenges**, and **traps**! There's even *Coach Kruzzlak's Guide to Sports*, which features actual sports-style challenges, and athletic backgrounds!"

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(Select to view)

Dungeon #176: Cross City Race by James “Grim” Desborough
 What could be easier than delivering a letter from one side of town to the other? Of course, it’s a bit more complicated than that—the delivery is actually part of an annual race which engages the town’s interest like no other event.

The goal is simple: take a letter from the town’s southern gate to the northern watchtower as quickly as possible. There are loose rules about magic and physical violence between competitors, but for the most part *Cross City Race* is a free-for-all with almost anything considered fair. The race is even open to interference from the citizens, with bands of children, ruffians, and bored city folk setting traps for the racers to watch them take a tumble!

Speedy delivery, indeed.

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Dungeon #213: Owlbear Run by Christopher Perkins and Steve Townshend

Other rulers can hold the standard jousting and archery tournaments... but Duke Hightower prefers something a little different. Each year, he hosts more unusual contests, with his two wizard brothers helping set the rules.



(Select to view)

This year? They're hosting an overland race that requires each team to escort a live owlbear from town to town! Along the way, competitors will face a variety of challenges—some devised by the wizardly brothers, others by competing teams or their sponsors, or even occurring entirely at random.

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The premise for each race can serve as a template for Dungeon Masters creating their own versions, whether overland or through city streets. For both races, **some conversion is necessary**. Ability checks and saving throws need their proper adjustments, and monsters should be swapped with their current stats.

The full issues of both *Dungeon #176* and *Dungeon #213* are available as downloadable PDFs for \$4.99 each at the DMs Guild.

BEHIND THE SCREENS: LAVA!

My family is mildly addicted to *Floor is Lava*. And if Netflix's metrics are to be believed, so too is the rest of the country. It's a clever concept, recreating the **classic kids game** but for teams of competing adults. Much like *America Ninja Warrior Junior*, I'm sure *Floor is Lava Junior* can't be too far behind (not to mention my own personally requested celebrity edition).

As part of any D&D in-game competitions, you might include your

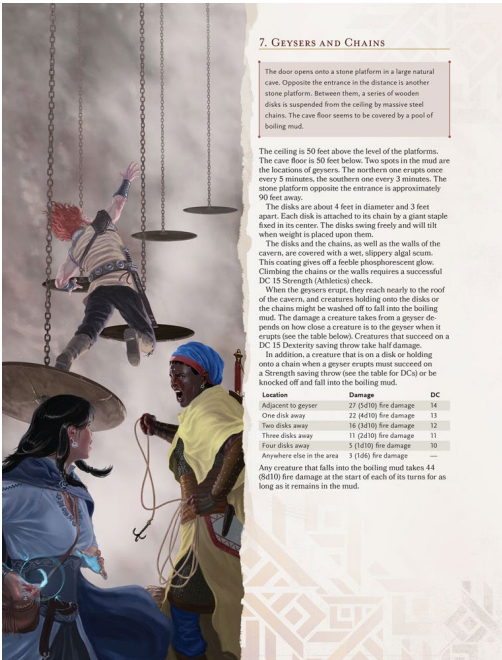
own version of *Floor is Lava*. The challenge has already been discussed in other places online (such as this [reddit thread](#)), and if you bring it into your campaign, you might consider a few suggestions:

1. Why Are We Here

Isn't that what we all ask ourselves? But specifically when it comes to a *Floor is Lava* course, the first question is whether it's part of a friendly competition or an actual deadly obstacle, as both have their design considerations.

As a starting example, we've taken one such challenge from *White Plume Mountain*, excerpted here for your use:

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(Select to view)

2. Find (or Adjust) the Proper Map

Many dungeon maps already include lava (such as this [dragon's lair](#) or [lava cave](#), both available on the DMs Guild). Other dungeon maps can be readily modified; for example, the lower level of *Hall of the Fire Giant King* (featured in this issue's Maps of the Month section) includes a small river of lava, but by assuming *all* floor squares are lava and the wall squares are rock ledges, you can create a more challenging course.

Instead of a dungeon, also look at interior building plans—especially those that feature a good amount of furniture to use as platforms (such as [issue #32's Lottie's Palace](#) from *Acquisitions Incorporated*). For friendlier competitions, assume the furnishings have been magically protected from melting, but that the rest of the floor is lava.

3. Temperature Check

What happens when someone falls in? If a fun challenge, victims might be instantly teleported out (and healed, à la Madam Pomfrey). However, if the real threat of death is involved, consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (as noted in this [reddit thread](#)). Rules for falling into

lava can be found on page 249 of the *DMG* as part of the Improvising Damage section, including a damage severity table based on character level.

4. Defining Movement

At higher levels, characters have increased movement at their disposal—such as levitation, flight, and teleportation—making obstacles more easily avoided (a dilemma faced by Robin in *Teen Titans Go!*) As a fun contest, it may be part of the rules that no such magic may be employed, or the course might either dampen such magic or cause random, unknown misdirections to take place. Outside of a controlled arena, wild updrafts may knock flying characters off course, and other denizens or traps may target anyone teleporting or taking to the air.

5. Lava Monster!

In addition to the inherent dangers of lava itself, consider adding a “lava monster”. Magmin, salamanders, even lava children might reach out for characters, while magma mephitis could fly around pushing competitors off ledges. In an abundance of self-promotion, I’ll mention that *Lost Laboratory of Kwalish* features a massive gelatinous cube (in place of lava) that must be similarly crossed—plus, it’s currently pay-what-you-want, with all proceeds benefitting *Extra Life/Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals!*



Tiles in the eyes of children by Don Dimanlig

6. Added Dangers

Any *Floor is Lava* course presents an environmental challenge—and the more interactive the environment, the more interesting for players to explore and experiment. In addition to static platforms, consider floating debris that passes by at variable speeds or with limited time before it sinks beneath the surface. And as employed on the *Floor is Lava* TV show, levers or switches might be used to alter the course, whether to provide added assistance or unexpected dangers when crossing.

For example, if the course involves a laboratory, instrument panels might raise, lower, or open cages; turn on/off electric currents; or release alchemical substances that harden parts of the lava or animate it into **more dangerous forms**.

All of which makes me wonder about other reality shows ripe for conversion. Just think of a D&D version of *Nailed It!*, but instead of highly complex deserts, the adventurers try to recreate elaborate potion recipes. Fail the wrong check, and you (or the judges) must roll on a potion miscibility table!



“These in-game activities are perfect if you need a short break in a long-running campaign. My personal favorite is *Owlbear Run* but they all offer a terrific amount of fun and I’m looking forward to adding *The Floor is Lava* to my game. Bravo to Bart for giving us inspiration for a whole new scenario based on a show he loves.”

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ARENA

Across Theros, contest grounds host athletic competitions and often serve as places to worship the god Iroas. The grandest hippodrome in Akros holds thousands of spectators, but more modest stadiums can be found throughout the land, serving as proving grounds for athletes and entertainment for the rich and poor. Foot and chariot races, hurling competitions, and combat sports (wrestling, boxing, and pankration) are all common events in arenas, especially during the Iroan Games, an annual series of athletic competitions held in Akros.

ARENA ADVENTURES

Adventures in an arena often feature the characters as contestants in an athletic competition. The reward for winning could be treasure, a favor, or an audience with a person of importance—even Iroas himself, in the case of the Iroan Games. The Arena Adventures table offers ideas for adventures that could occur in such a place.

ARENA ADVENTURES

d8 Adventure Goal

- 1 Help an unfit participant survive an athletic competition.
- 2 Convincingly lose an athletic competition so a gambler can win big.
- 3 Sabotage a star athlete's chances of winning.
- 4 Attend tryouts to become members of a chariot racing team.
- 5 Assassinate a person watching a competition before the final match ends.
- 6 Save a wrestler from a planned murder in the arena.
- 7 Capture a beast that has escaped from the stadium.
- 8 Recover a blessed trophy and award it to a contest's rightful victor.

ARENA MAP

The arena shown in map 4.5 has a ring of raised benches and private boxes around its sandy floor. The map of the arena's upper levels depicts the exterior seating and the interior halls below (both of which are largely mirrored on the map's opposite site). Tunnels and trapdoors allow competitors to enter the arena from almost any angle. A large tarpaulin attached to the roof can be unfurled to shade the arena's audience. An awards platform serves as a shrine to Iroas. Winners of athletic competitions stand here to receive medals, wreaths, rewards, the blessings of priests, and the praise of the crowd.

Outside the arena and beneath the seats are open areas and alcoves where vendors sell concessions and trinkets, along with booths for making bets.

The space under the arena holds gymnasia, an equipment hall, and several staging areas and specialty rooms used as locker rooms, animal pens, and separate training areas for various creatures.

ARENA VILLAINS

All sorts of unsavory elements can be found in an arena—backstabbing competitors, desperate gamblers, cruel trainers, savage animals, and worse. The Arena Villains table presents just a few ne'er-do-wells who might frequent physical contests.

ARENA VILLAINS

d8 Villain

- 1 A champion pankratiast (**Akroan hoplite**; see chapter 6) has her cronies lock everyone in the arena. She allows none to leave until a challenger defeats her.
- 2 A **minotaur** frees all the beasts in the amphitheater during a well-attended event.
- 3 A chariot racer (**gladiator**) poisons members of a rival team, causing them to fall asleep during competition.
- 4 A **mage** uses magic to spy on athletes' conversations and then blackmails them with the information.
- 5 A **stone giant** interrupts a session of games and demands a chance to compete.
- 6 A promoter forces athletes to overexert themselves, causing dangerous accidents during competitions.
- 7 An **archmage** enchants or polymorphs innocents, forcing them to participate in brutal contests.
- 8 A **druid** uses the *awaken* spell on beasts in the arena to make them more capable competitors.



pin. Matches last for an indeterminate number of 1-minute rounds, with a referee counting out loud so the wrestlers know when their time is up. At the end of each round, the wrestlers break their clinch and have a few moments to rest before returning to the center of the circle.

Participating in Wrestling: Goliath wrestling matches follow the grappling rules outlined on page 156 of the *Player's Handbook*, except that making an attack of opportunity against an opponent who's trying to start a grapple is considered cheating. Damaging an opponent in a wrestling match is considered cheating unless both wrestlers agree before the match begins to allow nonlethal attacks. Defeating a foe in a wrestling match important to the adventure earns experience just as any other combat would.

Goat-Ball: This team game uses a furry, misshapen ball made out of stuffed goat-hide—the more lopsided and lumpy the ball, the better. Goat-ball requires a dozen to two dozen platforms (usually boulders, logs, and tree stumps) raised above the ground in a random pattern. Two teams of four clamber onto adjacent platforms, and a referee runs out to place the goat-ball on a platform somewhere roughly equidistant from the two teams. The teams then leap from platform to platform, each trying to be the first to reach the ball.

Whichever team reaches the ball first is on offense. When a team is on offense, it tries to complete three consecutive passes involving teammates on four different platforms (in other words, you can't just pass it back and forth three times; you have to leap from platform to platform). If the team on offense completes three passes, whoever has the ball can try to hit an opponent with the thrown ball. The team on defense tries to intercept the ball and push its opponents off the platforms.

A player who falls off a platform (either because he missed a jump or because an opponent pushed him off) or gets hit by a ball is “out” and can't participate until possession changes and the two teams trade offensive and defensive roles. Whenever the ball hits the ground (including when the player holding the ball touches the ground), possession changes—unless the ball hits the ground after a successful throw at an opponent, in which case the offense keeps the ball. A team wins if all its opponents have been knocked out of the game at the same time.

Participating in Goat-Ball: The jumping and bull rush aspects of goat-ball use the usual D&D rules. Throwing a ball at an opponent is a ranged touch attack, and every nongoliath player takes a –4 penalty for nonproficiency because it's almost impossible to get used to the misshapen goat-ball. Throwing a ball to an ally is likewise a ranged attack, except that Dexterity bonuses and penalties are reversed when calculating the target's AC (in other words, it's easier to throw the ball to a dexterous target, and harder to get a clumsy teammate to catch it). To attempt an interception, you must be within 5 feet of the ball's path and get a better result on your ranged attack roll than the thrower got on his ranged attack roll. Also, because the players aren't fighting, they can share the same platform (and often the same square) without penalty. Winning a

game of goat-ball is a challenge equal to the combined CRs of the losing team members, as long as success in the game is somehow relevant to the larger adventure.

Drink-and-Tell: A decidedly nonathletic contest, the game of drink-and-tell involves participants and spectators alike sitting in a circle. One participant produces a massive flagon of specially brewed mead, drinks from it, and then tells a tale. Depending on how entertaining the tale is, he'll either hear cheers from the rest of the circle (meaning the participant is still in the game) or jeers (meaning the participant is now out of the competition but remains a spectator). Then the flagon is passed clockwise around the circle; spectators merely pass it to their left, but participants drink from it and offer a tale of their own. The flagon keeps going around the circle until it's either empty or only one participant remains. If drink-and-tell ends with an empty flagon, everyone who hasn't been knocked out can claim a shared victory.

Participating in Drink-and-Tell: It generally takes a successful DC 15 Perform (comedy) or Perform (oratory) check to earn the cheers of the circle. Unfortunately, the mead brewed for drink-and-tell, though tasty, is known to slur speech more than most alcohol, making success in later rounds more difficult. Drink-and-tell mead is technically an ingested poison (DC 14 Fort save; 1d3 Cha/1d3 Cha), although it only induces drowsiness and reduces speech to a slurred gibberish. It isn't otherwise dangerous.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Goliaths are inherently competitive, but most understand that art can't always be measured and doesn't have a “winner.” Goliaths decorate their weapons, tents, and what little clothing they wear with abstract designs, many featuring jagged, parallel lines and symbols that have astronomical significance (tracings of constellations, moon-and-sun designs, and so on). A few goliath painters practice representational art, but even they intentionally favor stick-figure designs that capture the essence of the subject, not its literal reality. “I could look at a running warrior anytime I like,” reasons the goliath artist. “Why would I try to reproduce his every feature on the cave wall?” For a goliath artist, the whole purpose of art is to be decorative and show the viewer something he can't see in the real world.

Goliath tribes have an extensive oral tradition of stories, myths, legends, and songs. Almost every tribe has one or more dawnsingers (see Chapter 5: Prestige Classes), an honorific given to bards who act as sentries and lorekeepers for the tribe. What free time isn't spent engaged in games and sports is spent listening to tales around the campfire—although they're mostly tales of games and sports, of course. Within the last decade or two, some tribes have started using the Dwarven alphabet to phonetically spell out words in the goliath language of Gol-Kaa. The first goliath scribes are enthusiastic, so it's not uncommon to find a mountain cave where an entire goliath epic has been painted on the walls, ceiling, and floor.

Goliath crafts are hampered by the paucity of raw materials above the tree line. As nomads, they don't mine metals

DINO WARS!

ARMY VS. DINOSAURS: THE FIGHT IS ON!

BY TOM MOLDVAY

Private Bill Smith crouched behind a boulder—not that the rock offered much protection from dinosaurs. But old habits die hard, and a soldier is trained to seek cover. Out in the mists, he heard the great beasts roaring. Bill took a deep breath and double-checked his loads. It wouldn't be long now.

The roaring grew nearer, and the ground shook. Bill wished he'd signed up for the tank corps. At least tankers had some protection.

The mist parted and a horror emerged. It was an allosaurus, as high as a second-floor window and as long as a house. Its brownish-gray skin glistened in the misty light. But all Bill had eyes for were its dagger-like claws and gaping mouth, filled with teeth that could rip a person in half.

The rest of Bill's squad spotted the dinosaur and opened up. Sharp rifle cracks filled the air. Off to his right, the staccato sputtering of the squad's machine gun could be heard. Bill didn't bother to aim. He just pointed his rifle and fired. The allosaurus was so big you couldn't miss. The problem was hitting a vital area. The beast didn't have any. Only massed fire would bring it down—if they were lucky.

They weren't.

The allosaurus lumbered right through the hail of gunfire, which merely made it angrier, and smashed into the skirmish line a dozen yards to Bill's left. Bill heard a crunching sound, then a horrible scream that ended in

the gurgling cry of "Mother!" It sounded like PFC Sam Moran, but the screaming was so different from Sam's normal voice that Bill couldn't be sure.

"You dirty lizard! You killed Sam! Eat lead, lizard spawn!" The shouting was from Sergeant Savage, who had been in line next to Sam. Cradling a tommy gun in her hands, the sergeant leaped from cover and ran straight for the allosaurus, firing burst after burst until her weapon was empty. The bullets stitched into the monster, which bellowed in rage and pain.

Sergeant Savage ripped a hand grenade from her belt. Pulling the pin with her teeth, she lobbed the grenade at the dinosaur's head. Then she dove to earth.

The explosion ripped into the allosaurus, blowing apart its jaw and half its neck. The dinosaur took one hesitant step forward—then it toppled. The earth shook with the impact of its fall.

A ragged cheer rang out from the squad.

The allosaurus was dead. They were still alive. But they had little time for celebrating. Out in the mists, Bill could already hear yet another wave of dinosaurs massing for the attack.

DINO WARS! is a set of miniatures rules that simulates combat between dinosaurs and army soldiers. The emphasis is on fictional combat as it appears in grade-B science-fiction movies and novels. The result is a set of rules that are easy to learn, with play that is both fun and fast.

All that's required for a game of DINO WARS! are these rules, some miniature soldiers and dinosaurs (cheap, colorful, plastic ones are best), a ruler or yardstick, and two six-sided dice (d6).



Two players are required (one for the army and one for the dinosaurs), although more can be added (to run several squads of soldiers or groups of dinosaurs).

DINO WARS! is broken down into game turns. Each game turn has five phases that must be completed in order. The game continues until one side is completely eliminated or one side fulfills its mission.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

1. Dinosaur Movement Phase
 - 1a. Closing fire
 - 1b. Overrun attacks
2. Regular Fire Phase
3. Dinosaur Attack Phase
4. Army Movement Phase
5. Secondary Fire Phase

1. DINOSAUR MOVEMENT PHASE

All dinosaurs can move during this phase. Each dinosaur can move any distance to the limit allowed by its movement rate, given in scale inches on the Dinosaur Statistics table (with modifiers from the Dinosaur Movement Modifiers table, as appropriate). Flying movement is measured specially, with both horizontal and vertical factors counted together for a

MOVEMENT AND ATTACKS

The controlling player always has the choice of how figures move and attack. Thus, a player could move one dinosaur and make all its overrun attacks before moving the next dinosaur. Likewise, soldiers need not declare their targets ahead of time. They might fire at one dinosaur until they kill it, then switch to another target. The choice of the order of movement and fire is part of the strategy of the game.

total movement rate (for example, a pterodactyl moving 12" upward and 24" forward has moved 36" total). If a dinosaur makes overrun attacks (see "Closing Fire and Overrun Attacks," below), there is a 2" movement penalty per overrun attack. If the optional rules are being used, there is also a 2" penalty for any unusual terrain (see "Optional Rules").

Closing Fire and Overrun Attacks. The Dinosaur Movement Phase has two special subphases. If a dinosaur makes contact with a soldier or vehicle figure, and the monster decides to make an overrun attack (for example, it decides to stamp on the army figure), the defender gets a chance to shoot before the dinosaur can attack. Such shooting is called closing fire.

All hand weapons, except grenades, can be used during closing fire. A soldier firing a hand weapon



in closing fire does not need to worry about line of sight, and is able to see the dinosaur perfectly well. All machine guns can also fire, but each requires a line of sight to do so (they're harder to move). Line of sight for a machine gun extends in a 180-degree arc to its front. Thus, a machine gun nest taking an overrun attack from the rear will not get closing fire. Other weapons, such as a tank gun or a mortar, do not get closing fire.

A vehicle gets closing fire only if it has a machine gun mounted on it, and if the gun has a line of sight to the dinosaur. Only one closing-fire attack per figure can be made. A figure attacked by more than one dinosaur gets closing fire only on the first dinosaur to attack.

A dinosaur that makes contact with a soldier or a vehicle during movement can make an overrun attack, which slows the dinosaur down, subtracting 2" from its movement rate. If a dinosaur does not have at least 2" of movement left when it makes contact, an overrun attack cannot be made. (Any dinosaur killed during closing fire is eliminated and gets no further attacks.)

If the overrun attack succeeds and the soldier is killed or the vehicle destroyed, the dinosaur can continue movement. The dinosaur can keep moving and making overrun attacks as long as it has enough movement to pay the overrun cost, and as long as each overrun attack succeeds.

An overrun attack fails if the defender survives. The defender survives if the attacking dinosaur rolls a miss, if the dinosaur doesn't destroy a vehicle (see "Damage"), or if the soldier is a special figure who makes a successful luck roll (see "Special Army Figures" and "Damage").

If an overrun attack fails, the dinosaur ends its movement in contact with the defender, and play continues normally. The defender cannot make closing fire, but might be able to fire again during the Regular Fire Phase. The dinosaur can attack again (providing it survives regular fire) during the Dinosaur Attack Phase.

The choice of whether or not to make an overrun attack is up to the dinosaur player. A player can always choose to stop movement for a dinosaur and not make an overrun attack. The dinosaur can still attack normally, however, just as the soldier can fire normally.

Example. A tyrannosaurus with a movement of 18" begins the turn 4" from a line of skirmishers. The tyrannosaurus moves 4" to attack the closest soldier. The soldier fires but does not kill the monster. The tyrannosaurus kills the soldier in an overrun, thus using up 2" more movement. The next soldier is 2" away. The dinosaur moves to that target, survives closing fire, and kills the soldier in another overrun.

The tyrannosaurus has now spent 10" on movement (4 + 2 + 2 + 2).

There is a soldier only 1" away. The tyrannosaurus moves to attack, once more survives closing fire, and kills its third victim in the turn, at the cost of 3" more movement (1" movement + 2" attack cost). The fourth soldier in the skirmish line is 4" away. The tyrannosaurus moves into contact, but does not have enough movement left for an overrun. There is, therefore, no closing fire. The soldier can still shoot during the Regular Fire Phase, just as the tyrannosaurus can attack during the Dinosaur Attack Phase.

2. REGULAR FIRE PHASE

Once all dinosaur movement has taken place, and all closing fire and overruns have been resolved, the army side has the opportunity for regular fire. All weapons can be fired in this phase, provided they are within range of and have a line of sight to a dinosaur target. See the Army Weapons table for weapon details; modifiers for attack rolls are on the Army Attack Modifiers table.

Some weapons shown on the Army Weapons table can be fired twice in a turn. These are weapons that do not have to be reloaded each turn or require no special handling. Such weapons can be fired during the Regular Fire Phase and once more in the course of the turn. The other fire attack can come either during closing fire or in the Secondary Fire Phase (but not both). Some circumstances prohibit firing more than once in a turn (for example, if the soldier is acting as a spotter for artillery fire; see "Indirect Fire").

Example. A stegosaurus tries to overrun a soldier shooting a rifle. The soldier fires during closing fire and hits the stegosaurus, but does not kill it. The stegosaurus rolls too high on its overrun attack, so the soldier survives. During the Regular Fire Phase, the soldier shoots again. The shot hits again, this time killing the stegosaurus.

3. DINOSAUR ATTACK PHASE

Once the army side has had a chance to fire all its weapons, every dinosaur in contact with a soldier or vehicle gets to make an attack. Only one attack per dinosaur can be made during the Dinosaur Attack Phase. There is no movement cost, since normal dinosaur attacks are not considered overruns.

4. ARMY MOVEMENT PHASE

After every dinosaur in contact with a soldier or vehicle has had a chance to attack, all army soldiers and vehicles are allowed to move. The movement rate for



soldiers is 6"; the movement rate for vehicles is 18" (see the Army Vehicles table and the Army Movement Modifiers table).

There is a special movement penalty for moving out of contact with a dinosaur. The penalty for a soldier is 2"; the penalty for a vehicle is 6". Thus, a soldier in contact with a dinosaur can move only 4" that turn; a vehicle in contact with a dinosaur has only 12" of movement left.

5. SECONDARY FIRE PHASE

Finally, after every army soldier and vehicle has had a chance to move, any soldier using a weapon that gets two attacks per turn and has not already fired twice gets a second shot.

Once all secondary fire is over, the turn ends. A new turn begins with a new phase of dinosaur movement.

Example. A triceratops tries to charge a tank. However, after measuring movement, the dinosaur is still 3" away. During the Regular Fire Phase, the tank fires both its cannon and its machine gun. The triceratops survives. The tank backs up 18" during the Army Movement Phase. In the Secondary Fire Phase, the tank's machine gun, but not its cannon, can fire again.

ATTACKS

Attacks are rolled using two six-sided dice (2d6). To succeed, the attack score or lower must be rolled. If the attack score is 8, a roll of 8 or lower indicates a successful attack, while a roll of 9 or higher indicates a failed attack. Attack scores are given in the Dinosaur Statistics table and the Army Weapons table (with modifiers for the latter in the Army Attack Modifiers table).

Several weapons on the Army Weapons table have two values listed, divided by a slash. The first number given is the attack score for direct fire. The second number is the attack score for indirect fire. For example, heavy artillery has an attack value of 9/7. The 9 value would be used if the artillery piece had a direct line of sight to the target dinosaur. The 7 value would be used for indirect fire (for example, if a spotter were calling down fire onto a target the artillery crew couldn't see directly).

Each army soldier uses whatever weapon the playing figure has. In the World War II era, the basic weapon is a rifle. In the modern era, the basic weapon is an assault rifle. In addition, every soldier is considered to have an unlimited amount of hand grenades. In play, few soldiers get to throw more than two before they are eaten, and unlimited grenades reduces bookkeeping for all players.

SPECIAL ARMY FIGURES

The army side can have three kinds of special figures: NCOs, leaders, and heroes (everyone else is a regular enlisted soldier). NCOs are noncommissioned officers: corporals and sergeants. They are often in charge of a fire team, section, or squad. Leaders are commissioned officers, usually lieutenants

and captains. They are the platoon and company commanders. Heroes can be of any rank selected by the army player.

Special figures should be chosen because they stand out from the rest of the figures at a glance. NCOs, leaders, and heroes are considered to always have the standard weapon of their time, along with whatever secondary weapon the figure is actually armed with. Thus, even though the actual figure is firing a pistol, a leader can shoot with a rifle (if from the World War II period) or an assault rifle (if from the modern era). Sometimes NCOs or heroes have weapons that are better than the basic ones (for example, automatic rifles).

Special figures always get a +1 modifier to the attack scores for weapons they use. Thus, an NCO firing a submachine gun would have an attack score of 9 instead of 8.

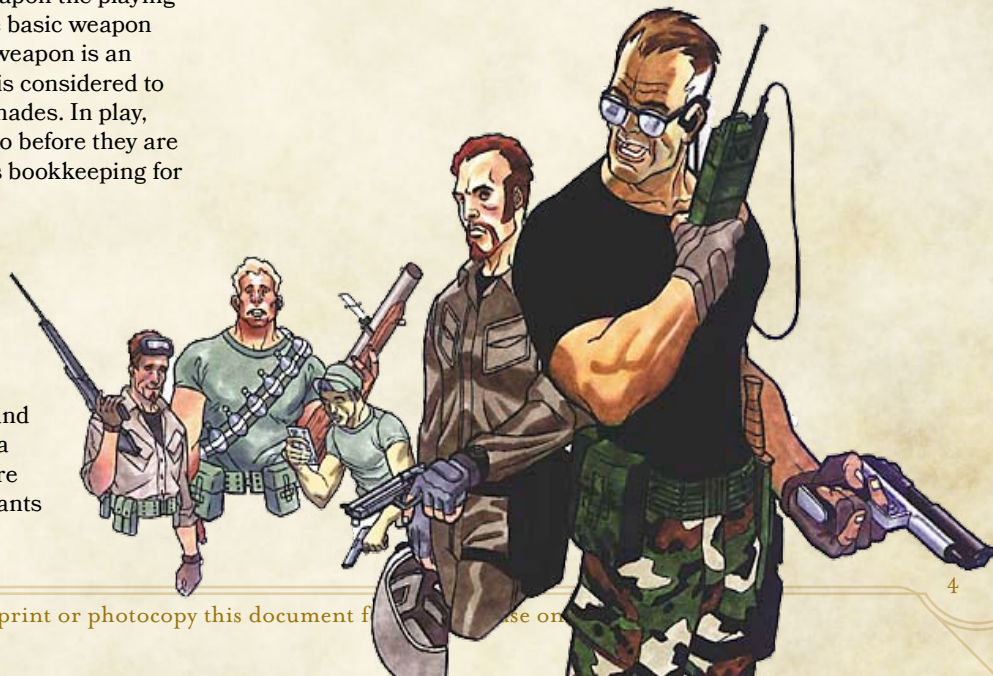
In addition, special figures are allowed to make luck rolls if successfully attacked by dinosaurs (see "Damage"). Successful luck rolls allow these figures to escape death and can also stop overrun attacks.

As a general rule, one out of every ten army figures can be a NCO. For every two NCOs, there can be one leader (usually a lieutenant or captain) and one hero (who could be of any rank). Thus a force of twenty-two soldiers could include eighteen enlisted soldiers, two NCOs, one leader, and one hero.

CREWED WEAPONS

Some large army weapons require a crew in order to be fired effectively. The minimum crew values given on the Army Weapons table are the number of soldier figures that must be designated as crew if this sort of weapon is to continue to fire each turn. If crew members fall below the minimum listed for such a weapon, a single individual can fire that weapon once only. Afterward, the weapon is considered unloaded and cannot be fired until the minimum number of crew spend one turn at the weapon without firing it (they are reloading it).

Weapon crews cannot fire their individual weapons in a turn if their crewed weapon has been or is about to be fired that turn. Thus, the army player has a choice each turn of whether to fire the weapon or all the crew's weapons. The only exception is that a crewed weapon



can never be fired if a dinosaur is in contact with it. The individual crew members must fire instead.

The +1 attack modifier for special figures does not apply to a crewed weapons attack if a special figure is part of a weapons crew. There is thus no advantage to having these figures join a weapons crew.

If a dinosaur attacks a crewed weapon, the dinosaur player has the choice of attacking either the weapon itself or the crew. Any attack that succeeds against a crewed weapon destroys that weapon.

Example. A howitzer crew has been firing at an oncoming allosaurus, which survives and keeps coming. The turn starts with the allosaurus 7" away from the howitzer. The allosaurus moves the 7" and decides to make an overrun attack on one of the crew. That individual alone is allowed to fire a rifle during closing fire, but the shot misses the allosaurus. The overrun succeeds. The allosaurus has plenty of movement left and tries to overrun another crew member. The allosaurus survives another closing-fire attack, but its own attack fails. The allosaurus ends its move in contact with the last three crew members and the howitzer.

During the Regular Fire Phase, the three crew members fire their rifles at the allosaurus. Two hit, but the allosaurus is not killed. The allosaurus then destroys the howitzer with a successful attack. The surviving crew members abandon the howitzer, moving 4" during the Army Movement Phase. Two of the three get secondary fire; the other crew member has no secondary fire after getting to make a closing fire attack.

DAMAGE

If a dinosaur's attack succeeds against a regular enlisted soldier, that soldier is killed. Special army figures have a chance to survive a dinosaur attack. On any successful dinosaur attack, a special figure gets a luck roll, as indicated on the following table.

Special Figure	Luck Roll
NCO	7
Leader	8
Hero	9

If the figure rolls the indicated luck roll or less on 2d6, the figure is only wounded and can continue to fight. (Wounding has no effect unless the optional rule for wounded soldiers is used; see "Optional Rules"). If the roll fails, the figure is killed. A special figure can be killed only by failing to make a luck roll. A hero hit by three dinosaurs must make three separate luck rolls; as long as the figure keeps succeeding on those rolls, the fight goes on. A successful luck roll ends an overrun attack just as if the dinosaur attack had failed.

Damage to dinosaurs and vehicles is different than damage to soldiers. Most dinosaurs and vehicles can take multiple hits. Dinosaurs have life points (LP). Vehicles have structural points (SP). Both concepts function essentially the same.

Dinosaurs and army weapons have damage values given on the Dinosaur Statistics and Army Weapons tables, respectively. For dinosaurs, these damage values are used only when fighting army vehicles. Ignore them when the dinosaur fights individual soldiers.

A dinosaur can continue to fight until it loses all its life points. A vehicle can continue to function until it loses all its structural points. Players must keep track of damage to dinosaurs and vehicles, either on a separate sheet of paper or on scraps of paper placed by the appropriate dinosaur or vehicle.

AUTOMATIC KILL

Certain weapons are so powerful that they have a chance to automatically kill a dinosaur. Likewise, certain dinosaurs have a chance to automatically destroy a vehicle. It takes an especially lucky roll for an automatic kill. Army weapons with an asterisk after their damage value on the Army Weapons table get an automatic kill if the player rolls a 2 on the attack dice.

Dinosaurs are a little more complicated. A dinosaur with a single asterisk after its damage value can destroy any vehicle, except a tank, on an attack roll of 2. Dinosaurs with two asterisks after their damage value can destroy a non-tank vehicle on an attack roll of 2 or 3, and can destroy a tank on an attack roll of 2. (A weapon or a dinosaur with no asterisk after its damage value can still harm a target, but it can't automatically destroy that target with one roll.)

Examples. A platoon armed with rifles faces a brachiosaurus. They must hit the creature with thirty-two successful shots before they can kill the eighty-nine-ton beast. On the other hand, a single hit from a bazooka could kill the dinosaur if the attack roll was a 2. Even if it wasn't a roll of 2, on a successful attack, the bazooka would do 3 LP damage instead of 1.

Likewise, a pterodactyl would have to hit a jeep three times to knock it out of commission. A monoclonius would take out a jeep on a single hit, since it does 3 SP damage, but the dinosaur would have to hit a tank five times to take it out. A triceratops would also have to hit the tank five times to take it out normally, but it could get lucky and destroy the tank with one hit if it rolled a 2.

ARMOR

Armor makes a figure harder to successfully attack in combat. Only dinosaurs have armor (the effects of vehicles' armor have been calculated into their structural points). The dinosaurs' armor value acts as a negative modifier to the attack score of an army attack. Thus, for a soldier attacking an ankylosaurus (armor 2) with a pistol (attack score 7), the attack would penetrate the dinosaur's bony armor only on a roll of 2 to 5.

If a dinosaur's armor value is given as two numbers divided by a slash, the first number applies to frontal attacks and the second applies to rear attacks. A dash means the dinosaur has no armor against a rear attack. Any attack within 180 degrees of the front of the dinosaur figure is considered a frontal attack. If it is uncertain whether the attack is from the front or rear, give the dinosaur the benefit of the doubt.

TRANSPORTATION

The army player might want to transport soldiers in or on vehicles for faster movement. The carrying capacity for different vehicles is given on the Army Vehicles table.

This capacity is a range of numbers, since not all vehicles of the same type are of the same size. Use the minimum values for small vehicles, the average for medium-sized vehicles, and the maximum for the largest vehicles of any particular type. A player can generally gauge by eye what carrying capacity seems reasonable for any vehicle. If difficulties arise, see how many figures can actually fit into or onto the vehicle without falling off.

Carrying capacity does not include the vehicle's crew, which includes the driver and enough soldiers to work any weapons mounted on the vehicle. Crew capacities are given on the Army Vehicles table, but these can vary depending on the type of weapons mounted on the vehicle. Every vehicle has a driver. If the vehicle has a mounted machine gun, there will be one additional crew member (that is, two crew members in total). If the vehicle has a mounted cannon, there will be two additional crew members (three total). If the vehicle has both a machine gun and a cannon, there will be three extra crew members (four total).

A tank usually has a crew of four (a driver, machine gunner, and two cannon operators), usually led by a NCO. If the army side has three tanks, one crew member can be a leader; if it has five tanks, then one crew member can be a hero.

Example. The army player has a half-track that can carry six soldiers. If the half-track had a mounted machine gun, its carrying capacity would be reduced by one. If the half-track had a mounted cannon, its carrying capacity would be reduced by two.

LOADING AND UNLOADING

It takes half a turn's worth of movement to load or unload a vehicle. The penalty applies both to the movement of the soldiers being loaded or unloaded and to the movement of the vehicles that turn. In effect, this means that only soldiers within 3" of a vehicle will be able to load into it, and that the vehicle can move only 9" that turn. Likewise, on the turn in which the vehicle unloads, it can move only 9" and the offloaded soldiers will be able to move only 3".

The penalty for moving out of contact with a dinosaur is calculated before the half-movement penalty for loading or unloading is applied. Thus, a truck (movement 18") in contact with a dinosaur could move only 6" away to unload its passengers ($18 - 6 = 12$, $12 \div 2 = 6$), who would each have another 2" of movement ($6 - 2 = 4$, $4 \div 2 = 2$).

Unless the optional rule for moving fire is being used, troops carried in or on a vehicle will not be able to fire until they are unloaded.

VEHICLE PERSONNEL CASUALTIES

If a vehicle is destroyed, there is a chance that its driver, crew, and passengers are killed. The army player should roll 2d6 for every individual in or on the vehicle at the time it is destroyed. A roll of 7 or less indicates survival; on a roll of 8 or more, the individual is killed. Special army figures are allowed their usual luck rolls if they fail this survival roll.

TOWING AND SETTING UP WEAPONS

A truck, half-track, or tank can tow light artillery or a recoilless rifle. Movement while towing is one-half normal. This movement penalty is cumulative with any other penalties. Thus, a truck towing a recoilless rifle and picking up passengers could move only $4\frac{1}{2}$ " that turn.

It takes a full turn to hitch or unhitch a weapon. After the weapon is unhitched, it will be ready for fire on the next turn. The vehicle can also transport the weapon's crew.

Once placed, heavy artillery remains in place for the duration of the game and cannot be moved. Its facing can be changed, however, without penalty.

The lighter crewed weapons, such as machine guns and mortars, take half a turn's movement to set up or dismantle. The minimum crew number listed is also the minimum number needed to move the weapon. If there is not enough movement left to pay the setup penalty, a weapon cannot be fired. Thus, if a heavy machine gun crew moved 4", they could not then set up their gun and fire in that turn.

RANGES

An army attack can succeed only if the dinosaur is within range of the particular weapon being used. If there is any debate on whether a dinosaur is within range, give the army the benefit of the doubt.

If a weapon has two ranges separated by a slash, the first range is for manual fire, and the second is for fire from a fixed position (a tripod, bipod, vehicle mount, and so forth).

Mortars have a special minimum range, since they are arced-fire weapons whose shells are lobbed at the enemy. A mortar must have at least 18" of range to fire effectively, but will not be able to attack beyond 60".

LINE OF SIGHT

A direct-fire weapon has a single attack score and must have line of sight to be able to fire. If a soldier can't see a dinosaur, that dinosaur can't be attacked. Line of sight can be blocked by unusual terrain, vehicles, or other dinosaurs. If there is any disagreement about line of sight, give the army the benefit of the doubt.

INDIRECT FIRE

Weapons that have two attack scores divided by a slash (including mortars and artillery) are allowed indirect fire. Individuals using such weapons can shoot at a target they cannot see as long as some soldier who can see the dinosaur acts as a spotter. Any individual can act as a spotter for indirect artillery fire. It is easiest to assume that all figures and vehicles in the army are in radio contact with each other. A spotter who calls down fire can shoot a personal weapon only once that turn. Remember to use the second (lesser) attack score for indirect fire only; the first score is for direct fire.

THE RAMBO RULE

A hero (and only a hero) can pick up a light machine gun and fire it manually. This is the one instance where this

weapon can be fired without its full crew for more than just one turn. Roll 1d6 to see how many turns' worth of ammunition are already loaded into the light machine gun when the hero picks it up to fire. Use the unfixed range (24") for the weapon.

SCALE

The movement rates and ranges given are for 1:32 (54 mm) scale (1:35 scale is essentially the same). This is the usual scale for toy plastic soldiers, and many rubber dinosaurs and plastic model kits are on the market in that scale. The same scale is appropriate for some "action figure" toys.

A second, equally useful scale is 1:76 or 1:72 — the approximate scale that many plastic dinosaurs come in. Extensive figure and vehicle model lines come in this smaller scale, which would be applicable for human figures as small as 15 mm and as large as 25 mm. If the smaller scale is used, reduce all movement rates and ranges (including any movement penalties) by half. Thus, a tyrannosaurus would move 9" and spend 1" for an overrun.

There is no need to be fanatical about scale. The idea is to have fun without spending a lot of money on figures. Use what you can get. Reasonably faithful scale figures simply look better, such that a tyrannosaurus appears a lot more frightening if it stands four times the height of a soldier. Scales can even be mixed if necessary, using larger soldiers but smaller dinosaurs (since both are often available in cheap plastic bags at toy stores, drug stores, hobby stores, and so forth). Figures of different scales can also be combined. In particular, smaller dinosaurs can be used with larger ones as young dinosaurs, having fewer life points and doing less damage.

The larger scale is best played on a large floor or in a yard. The smaller scale can be played on a large table. If space is a problem, lower the movement rates and ranges accordingly. Dividing these values by three or even four will allow play on an average-sized kitchen table. As long as the proportion is kept the same throughout, the rules will play well.

OPTIONAL RULES

All optional rules have been rated, showing which side they are likely to favor and how strong the change will probably be. Letters are used to denote which side is favored. "A" means the rule favors the army; "D" means the rule favors the dinosaurs; "N" means the rule favors neither side. Rules that favor one side or the other are also rated from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning the rule only slightly favors that particular side, while 5 means the rule highly favors that side. The ratings were included to help players adjust the play balance when deciding which optional rules to use.

Terrain Penalties (D1). A bit of terrain can spruce up any battlefield, be it the kitchen table or the backyard. Model trees, potted plants, Styrofoam hills, gravel from the driveway, vacuform terrain, tree branches—use whatever works.

For simplicity, all terrain except the playing surface (table, floor, or ground) is considered "unusual" and has

a penalty when moved through. The movement penalty is 2" for soldiers and dinosaurs, and 6" for vehicles. The penalty applies if a figure moves through that terrain during any part of the turn. The penalty is paid only once per turn, no matter how many types of unusual terrain are moved through. Thus, a tank moving down a hill, across broken ground, and into the woods still has only a 6" movement penalty.

When calculating movement penalties, always take subtractive penalties first, then calculate divisive penalties. For example, a tank moving out of contact with a dinosaur, over a hill, and unloading passengers could move only 3" that turn ($18 - 6 - 6 = 6$; $6 \div 2 = 3$).

If subtractive penalties reduce a figure's movement to zero, the figure is trying to do too much that turn and must choose between the various options.

Cover (N). Smaller dinosaurs (coelophysis, deinonychus, and so forth) in appropriate terrain (broken, woods, ruins, and such) are considered to have cover, and a -1 is applied to a weapon's attack score for attacks against them. Most dinosaurs are too big for cover to be a factor.

If buildings are being used, soldiers inside a building impose -1 to a dinosaur's attack score only on the first turn any particular dinosaur attacks the building. Thus, the first time a tyrannosaurus attacks soldiers inside a building, it succeeds only on a 9 or less. After the first attack, the tyrannosaurus hits normally. Smaller dinosaurs are considered to have broken into the building, and larger ones to have broken down the building.

Dive Move (D2). Flying dinosaurs gain a special dive move when swooping down on their prey. The move is measured directly on the diagonal instead of using the horizontal-vertical method. It thus shortens movement into an attack. Such a move is really appropriate only when the dinosaur is diving to attack, not when it is climbing for altitude.

Minimum Altitude (A2). Each time a flying dinosaur takes to the air, it must move at least 6" upward. If the dinosaur does not attain at least 6" of altitude, its movement in that turn is limited to half normal.

Dino Rage (D5). A dinosaur does not die when reduced to 0 LP. Instead, like a special army figure, it gets a luck roll. It can then continue to fight on as long as it keeps making a luck roll after every successful attack by the army side. The dinosaur luck roll depends on its attack score, as indicated on the following table.

Attack Score	Luck Roll
8	6
9	7
10	8

Ramming Move (A3). Normally, vehicles attack only with whatever weapons are mounted on them. As an option, allow a vehicle to make a ramming attack against a dinosaur. If the vehicle has enough movement, the ramming attack succeeds on a roll of 10 or less on 2d6. On a roll of 11 or 12, the dinosaur evades the ramming vehicle. Whether the attack succeeds or not, a vehicle that chooses to ram a dinosaur wrecks its suspension and is immobile for the rest of the game.

The army player can still fire the vehicle's weapons, if appropriate.

If the ramming attack succeeds, the vehicle does life point damage equal to its structural points. Thus, a jeep would do 3 LP on a ramming attack, while a tank would do 15 LP.

Moving Fire (A4). Troops carried in or on vehicles do not normally fire until they are offloaded. If this optional rule is used, allow half of the carried troops to fire while the vehicle is in motion (round numbers up). Firing while in or on a vehicle imposes a -2 penalty to a weapon's attack score. Thus, a soldier armed with a rifle would need to roll 5 or less on the attack while in the back of a truck.

High-Caliber Ammo (A1). The Army Weapons table assumes standard ammunition for weapons. Rifles and pistols can come in varieties using high-caliber bullets with more stopping power than standard ammunition. If high-caliber ammunition is used, a weapon's damage is increased to 2 LP but its attack score is lowered by 1. Thus, a .44 magnum revolver would do 2 LP damage and have an attack score of 6.

Snipers (A3). One soldier per ten enlisted soldiers can be designated a sniper. A sniper increases the range of a rifle or assault rifle by 6" and increases the weapon's attack score by 1. A sniper could also be an NCO or hero (but not a leader), increasing the weapon's attack score by a total of 2.

Limited Grenades (D3). In the regular rules, the army player does not keep track of how many grenades each soldier throws. Any soldier who can move into position to throw a grenade can do so. Optionally, each regular soldier carries only one hand grenade, though NCOs, leaders, and heroes still have unlimited supplies of grenades.

Fire into Combat (D4). In the regular rules, soldiers can fire at dinosaurs even if the dinosaur is currently fighting (that is, in contact with) another soldier or a vehicle, without risk of hurting the friendly soldier or vehicle. As an optional rule, if an army figure fires into an ongoing combat, a friendly figure or vehicle might be hit by accident.

If the attack hits the dinosaur, there is no problem. If the attack misses, it might hit the figure or vehicle the dinosaur was fighting. Roll 2d6; on a roll of 10 or higher, the attack hits the friendly figure or vehicle. Roll for each appropriate miss. Multiple damage applies if the target is a vehicle.

Special Forces (A4). The army player can have one small unit consisting entirely of heroes. This elite unit should be no larger than 20 percent of the total army size. The unit represents one of the special forces of the world's armies (Green Berets, SAS, Rangers, Spetsnaz, commandos, paratroopers, and so forth).

Wounded Soldiers (D3). Any special army figure that is hit by a dinosaur but succeeds on a luck roll is wounded. The figure's modification to a weapon's attack score is lost for the rest of the game (including a sniper modification, if applicable). If this rule is used, it will be necessary to keep track of wounded figures in the same way a player keeps track of wounded dinosaurs and damaged vehicles.

Paratroopers (A3). One small unit, no larger than 20 percent of the army, can be designated as paratroopers.

This unit's setup is handled differently than other army units. To simulate a paratroop, the army player makes a paper airplane and launches it from one edge of the playing surface (player's choice of which edge). Within 2" of wherever the paper airplane lands is where the paratroopers set up. If the airplane flies completely beyond the playing surface, allow the player to try again on the next turn, until the plane eventually lands inside the playing surface.

Dino Charge (D2). On the first time a dinosaur attacks (and only then), give it an additional 2" of movement to simulate an enraged charge. This bonus might allow an additional overrun attack.

If all of the optional rules are used, the advantages in point values are equal for both sides.

PLAY BALANCE

The following point system offers a way to balance both sides in the game. First, total up the points for the army. The dinosaur side should have approximately twice as many points as the army in order for the battle to be fair.

A basic army soldier is worth 2 points. An NCO is worth 3 points, a leader is worth 4, and a hero is worth 5. A vehicle's point cost equals its structural points plus additional points for its crew (as per regular soldier values), with an additional 1 point for a mounted machine gun and 2 points for a mounted cannon. Each crewed weapon is worth a number of points equal to one less than the minimum crew size required.

The point cost system allows players to design vehicles and army groups. For simplicity, some average vehicle point costs and crewed weapon modifiers are given below. The first point value is for an unarmed vehicle; the second is for an armed one.

Vehicle	Points
Motorcycle	2/4
Jeep	4/6
Truck	5/7
Half-track	6/10
Armored car	7/11
APC	7/9
Tank	—/22

Each dinosaur has a point cost equal to its life points. A +1 modifier is added if the dinosaur moves faster than 24".

Example. One player controls an army group of twenty-two soldiers, including two NCOs, one leader, and one hero. The group has a heavy machine gun and a mortar. Attached to the group is one tank (with a tank gun and machine gun) plus an unarmed truck. The point size for the group would therefore be 80 points (44 soldier points + 7 point for special figures + 2 points for special weapons + 22 points for the tank + 5 points for the truck).

Battling the army group are two tyrannosaurs (30 points), two triceratops (30 points), an apatosaurus (24 points), two dimetrodons (12 points), two plateosaurs (14 points), two stegosaurus (20 points), three pterodactyls (6 points), and two ankylosaurs (24 points). The dinosaur side totals 160 points.

GAME SETUP

There are two kinds of setup: random and deliberate. In either case, dinosaurs cannot be set up closer than 24" (preferably 36") to any army soldier or vehicle. Two setup examples are given below. "Dino Island" is a random setup. "Time Gate" is a deliberate setup.

DINO ISLAND

The playing area simulates an island. The playing surface is about 200 square feet in size (12 feet by 15 feet will work). Neither side can leave the island at any time. Take twelve chits or scraps of paper, numbered 1 to 12. Distribute them across the playing area in twelve different locations, separated by at least 24" if the chits are placed on the most prominent landmarks or by 36" if spaced evenly in a 3-by-4 grid.

Each side has three players. Each player on the army team has an army group of 50 to 100 points, and each dinosaur player has one-third of the dinosaurs. Setup is random. Using a set of twelve duplicate chits, have each player draw one chit to determine where to set up. The first figure a player places must go on the spot marked. The player's other figures are placed near the first one in any order desired, but no farther than 12" away from the marked spot. Alternatively, a dinosaur player places one figure first, then an army player puts down one figure, and this alternating setup continues until all six players are set up.

The battle is a fight to the death. Once one side has been completely wiped out, the game ends.

Variations. A fourth army player can control all the tanks; the dinosaur total is then divided into four teams too. Point values, playing areas, number of players, and setup spaces can all be varied as well.

TIME GATE

The premise of this scenario is that the army force has become lost in time. The only way back to its own time is through a special gate. The gate sets up a field between two poles, spaced scale inches apart. Unfortunately, the army has only one of the poles. The other is hidden somewhere in dinosaur territory. The army must invade the land of the dinosaurs and search until the second pole is found. The poles can then be set up so the soldiers can go home.

It helps to have a neutral referee to place the second pole in a reasonable spot and oversee hidden movement. Dinosaurs can hide behind unusual terrain and will thus not be spotted until an army player comes within 18" of them. Hidden dinosaurs are not placed until spotted. Both sides can divide their total forces any way they wish (thus the army can form recon squads). The setup area can vary as circumstances dictate, as long as there is ample room for movement. Two soldiers can carry the gate pole, or it can be loaded into a vehicle (it takes up the space of one soldier).

The game ends when the army escapes back to its own time, or when the dinosaurs wipe out all the army figures.

Variation. The army begins the game entirely mechanized. To compensate, add several areas of impassable terrain (deep swamps, high mountains, and so on).

DINOSAUR DESCRIPTIONS

Dinosaurs and the other unusual reptiles used in this game are detailed in the following section, with notes on their sizes, diets, and the geologic period in which they were found. The Permian period lasted from 286 to 248 million years ago, and came just before the three great ages of dinosaurs in the Mesozoic era. The dinosaur ages were the Triassic (248 to 213 million years ago), the Jurassic (213 to 144 million years ago), and the Cretaceous (144 to 65 million years ago).

Allosaurus. 40 feet long, 15 feet tall, 3 tons; carnivore; Jurassic. The most dangerous predator of its time, allosaurus had clawed forelimbs and hind legs for pinning down its prey, and a huge mouth for ripping flesh.

Anatosaurus. 30 feet long, 13 feet tall, 4 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This was the classic duck-billed dinosaur, so named for its long, low skull that resembles a duck's bill and its webbed, three-toed feet. Similar duckbills grew as large as 43 feet long and 5 tons.

Ankylosaurus. 35 feet long, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This creature's body was completely protected by a shell-like mass of bony plates. Its tail, ending in a heavy club, could be swung at enemies with fatal results.

Apatosaurus. 70 feet long, 14½ feet at shoulder, 33 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. This monster's prime defenses were its long, whiplike tail and its ability to rear up on its hind legs and bring its great weight crashing down on an enemy.

Brachiosaurus. 75 feet long, 21 feet at shoulder, 89 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. One of the most massive, though not longest, animals ever to walk the Earth, Brachiosaurus had a long neck and served the same ecological function as a giraffe, browsing off treetops.

Ceratops. 20 feet long, 8 feet tall, 1 ton; carnivore; Jurassic. This swift, savage carnosaur had a bony ridge above each eye and a hornlike growth above its nose. Fossil footprints suggest it may have hunted in packs.

Coelophysis. 10 feet long, 5½ feet tall, 65 pounds; carnivore; Triassic. This light, agile creature had hollow bones and could run swiftly on its birdlike legs. It may have hunted in packs and been cannibalistic.

Deinonychus. 13 feet long, 7 feet tall, 300 pounds; carnivore; Cretaceous. Deinonychus had a comparatively large brain and probably hunted in packs. Its second toe bore a sickle-shaped claw nearly 6 inches long that could be raised up and back when running.

Deinoceratops. 40 feet long, 20 feet tall; 2 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Known only from a pair of 8½-foot-long arms (each ending in claws 8 inches long), this could represent a type of large, fast dinosaur that primarily used its claws instead of its teeth to hunt.

Deinosuchus. 50 feet long, 9 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. The largest known crocodile, this was not a dinosaur but would have been contemporary with them.

Dimetrodon. 13 feet long, 1 ton; carnivore; Permian. The dimetrodon was not actually a dinosaur, but a reptile that lived some 50 million years before dinosaurs evolved. It is characterized by its spiny sail back, which probably served to control its body temperature.

Diplodocus. 90 feet long, 16 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. With its tremendous snaky neck and long whiplike tail, this dinosaur was among the longest to walk the land.

Dolichosuchus. 18 feet long, 10 feet tall, 350 pounds; carnivore; Triassic. This dinosaur was similar to coelophysids, only larger.

Dryptosaurus. 22 feet long, 8 feet tall, 500 pounds; carnivore; Cretaceous. Dryptosaurus had huge back legs that might have been used to leap upon prey.

Gallimimus. 13 feet long, 7 feet tall, 250 pounds; omnivore; Cretaceous. Gallimimus was the largest known ostrich-like dinosaur.

Hylaeosaurus. 20 feet long, 3 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Hylaeosaurus was the third dinosaur discovered (1832). It had a series of large, hard, symmetrical plates growing down its head and back, plus protective spikes growing out of its sides and up its tail.

Iguanodon. 30 feet long, 16½' tall, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. The second dinosaur discovered (1822), this bipedal dinosaur was strong and bulky, with curious spiked thumbs.

Megalosaurus. 30 feet long, 12 feet tall, 1½ tons; carnivore; Jurassic and Cretaceous. The first dinosaur discovered (1677) and named (1824), megalosaurus was a typical carnosaur with a bulky neck, large jaws, large hind legs, shorter forelegs, and a long tail.

Monoclonius. 20 feet long, 3 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Monoclonius had a short, scalloped bone frill. Above each eye was a small horn, and above its snout was an extremely long horn, like that of a rhinoceros.

Pachycephalosaurus. 15 feet long, 8 feet tall, 800 pounds; herbivore; Cretaceous. The classic "bone-headed" dinosaur, this one's brain was encased in a solid dome of bone 10 inches thick. It could have used head-butting as a defense and as a mating ritual.

Paleoscincus. 23 feet long, 4 tons; herbivore, Cretaceous. Paleoscincus had solid armor plates on its back, and spines on its flank and tail.

Parasaurolophus. 33 feet long, 23 feet tall, 5 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This dinosaur is noted for its crest in the shape of a great tube extending from the back of its skull.

Plateosaurus. 26 feet long, 2 tons; omnivore; Triassic. A mostly bipedal dinosaur that sometimes went on all fours, this was a possible ancestor of the later herbivorous giants like apatosaurus and diplodocus.

Pterodactyl. 13-foot wingspan; 15 pounds; piscivore (fish-eater); Jurassic. This flying reptile was not actually a dinosaur. Elongated arm and hand bones supported its wings.

Pteranodon. 23-foot wingspan, 40 pounds; piscivore; Cretaceous. Another flying reptile that was not actually a dinosaur, pteranodon's elongated crest behind its head probably acted as a stabilizer in flight.

Quetzalcoatlus. 39-foot wingspan, 150 pounds; piscivore; Cretaceous. A flying reptile (not a dinosaur) known from only fragmentary remains, it might have been the largest flying creature of all time.

Saltasaurus. 40 feet long, 8 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Saltasaurus had thousands of small bony

studs and plates guarding its broad back and sides, but otherwise it looked like a small apatosaurus.

Spinosaurus. 40 feet long, 7 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Spinosaurus had a sail on its back that extended up to 5 feet in height.

Stegosaurus. 30 feet long, 4 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. Stegosaurus is noted for the two rows of alternating triangular plates running along its back. Its real defense was its tail spikes. It had an enlargement of the spinal cord above its hind legs that may have acted like a second brain to control the movement of its legs and tail.

Stenonychosaurus. 6½ feet long, 80 pounds; omnivore; Cretaceous. An agile rapid runner roughly the size of a human (though lighter), it had probably the largest brain-to-body ratio of any dinosaur.

Styracosaurus. 18 feet long, 2½ tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This dinosaur had a short, bony frill endowed with a number of long, backward-pointing spikes. It had a single long horn growing from its nose.

Therizinosaurus. 35 feet long, 18 feet tall, 1½ tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Known from only a single arm that was more than 8 feet long, this carnosaur had claws nearly 1 foot long. Like Deinonychus, it could represent a type of fast dinosaur that hunted primarily with its claws instead of its jaws.

Torosaurus. 25 feet long, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Torosaurus resembled triceratops, but had a much larger frill-crest (reaching almost halfway down its back).

Triceratops. 30 feet long, 9 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This fierce-looking dinosaur had a short, solid frill and three horns: two long ones (up to 3 feet long) over its eyes, and one short horn over its snout.

Tyrannosaurus. 50 feet long, 20 feet tall, 8 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Tyrannosaurus might have been the most powerful carnivore to ever walk this planet. It had a huge head with dagger-like teeth 6 inches long, massive hind legs, a long tail, and ridiculously short forearms.

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DINOSAUR STATISTICS

Dinosaur	Life Points	Movement	Attack Score	Damage	Armor
Allosaurus	10	18"	10	3*	—
Anatosaurus	10	18"	8	2*	—
Ankylosaurus	12	12"	9	2*	2
Apatosaurus	24	12"	8	2**	—
Brachiosaurus	32	12"	8	2**	—
Ceratosaurus	7	18"	9	2*	—
Coelophysis	1	24"	9	1	—
Deinoceris	9	24"	10	1	—
Deinonychus	3	24"	10	1	—
Deinosuchus	15	12"/24" ¹	9	3**	1
Dimetrodon	6	18"	9	2	—
Diplodocus	20	12"	8	2**	—
Dolichosuchus	4	24"	10	2	—
Dryptosaurus	6	18"	10	2	—
Elanodon	3	24"	10	1*	—
Hylaeosaurus	10	12"	9	2*	2
Iguanodon	12	18"	8	2*	—
Megalosaurus	8	18"	10	2*	—
Monoclonius	9	18"	9	3*	1/—
Pachycephalosaurus	5	24"	9	2*	—
Paleosaurus	10	12"	9	2*	2
Parasaurolophus	11	18"	8	2*	—
Plateosaurus	8	18"	8	2	—
Pterodactyl	1	36"	9	1	—
Pteranodon	2	36"	9	1	—
Quetzalcoatlus	3	36"	9	1*	—
Saltsaurus	14	12"	8	2*	1
Spinosaurus	14	18"	10	3*	—
Stegosaurus	11	18"	9	2*	1
Stenonychosaurus	1	24"	10	1	—
Styracosaurus	9	18"	9	3*	1/—
Therizinosaurus	7	24"	10	3*	—
Torosaurus	12	18"	9	3**	1/—
Triceratops	14	18"	9	3**	1/—
Tyrannosaurus	15	18"	10	3**	—

1. Movement rate of 24" across water only.

* Automatically destroys any non-tank vehicle on a 2.

** Destroys any non-tank vehicle on 2–3; destroys a tank on a 2.

DINOSAUR MOVEMENT MODIFIERS

Situation	Modifier
Overrun	–2
Unusual terrain (optional)	–2
Charge (optional)	+2*

* First turn of attacking only



ARMY WEAPONS

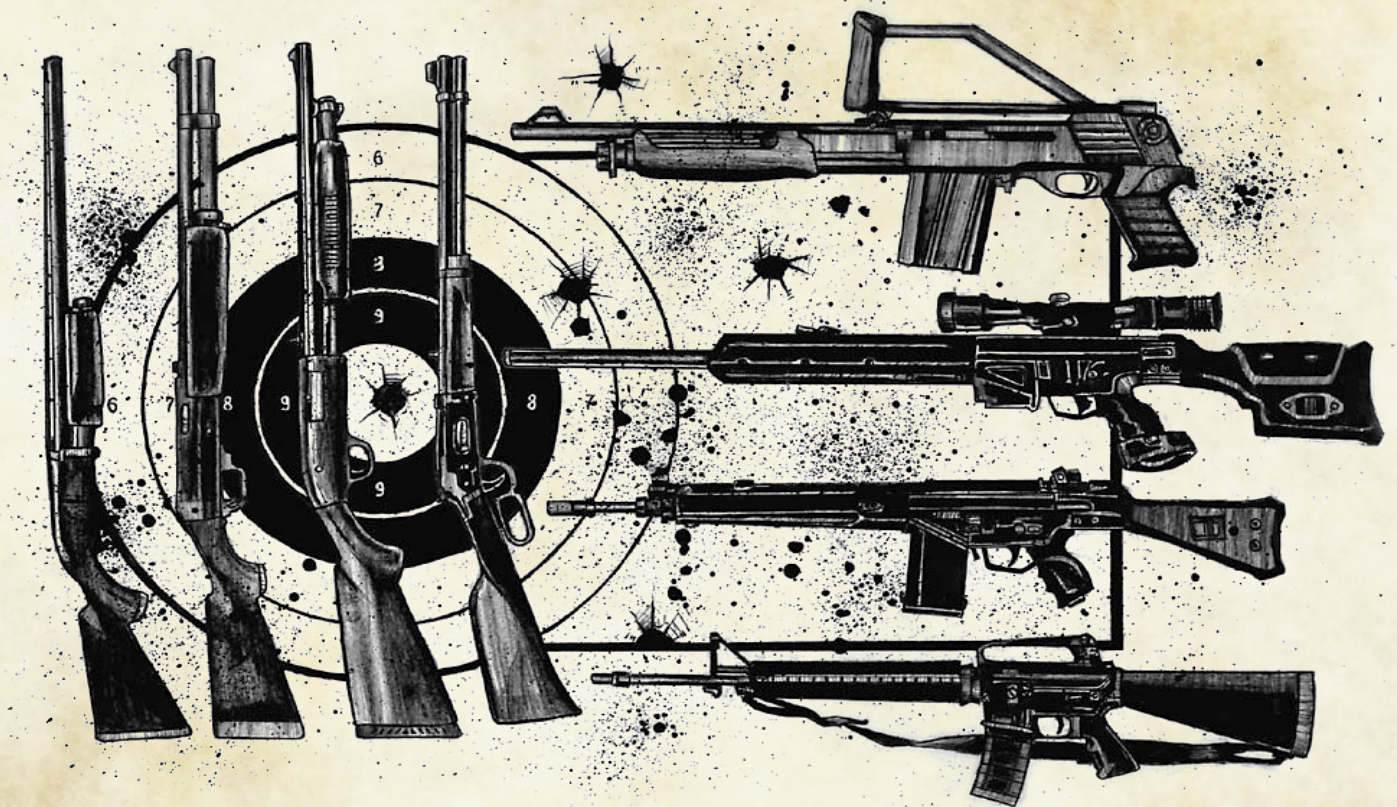
Weapon	Range	Damage	Attack Score	Minimum Crew
Rifle ¹	18"	1	7	—
Assault rifle ¹	12"	2	8	—
Submachine gun ¹	6"	2	8	—
Pistol ¹	6"	1	7	—
Grenade	3"	3*	8	—
Flamethrower	6"	3	6	—
Automatic rifle ¹	18"/24"	2	8	—
Bazooka/rocket	12"	3*	6	—
Light machine gun ¹	24"/36"	2	9	2
Heavy machine gun ¹	48"	2	9	2
Recoilless rifle	24"	3*	7	2
Mortar	18"—60"	3*	7/6	2
Light artillery/tank gun	60"	3*	9/7	3
Heavy artillery	72"	3*	9/7	4

1. Can make two attacks per turn.

* Automatic kill on an attack roll of 2.

ARMY ATTACK MODIFIERS

Modifier	Factor
+1	Hero/leader/NCO
+1	Snipers (optional)
-X	X = any dinosaur armor
-1	Cover (optional)
-1	Higher-caliber ammo (optional)
-2	Moving fire (optional)



ARMY VEHICLES

Vehicle	Structural Points	Carry Capacity	Crew
Motorcycle	1	1	1(2)
Jeep	3	3	1(2)
Truck	4	8	1(2)
Half-track	5	4	1-3
Armored car	6	3	1-3
APC (armored personnel carrier)	6	6	1(2)
Tank	15	4	4

ARMY MOVEMENT MODIFIERS

Condition	Soldiers	Vehicles
Base rate	6"	18"
Escape from dinosaur	-2"	-2"
Load/unload vehicle	× 1/2	× 1/2
Set up/dismantle weapon	× 1/2	—
Towing artillery	—	× 1/2
Unusual terrain (optional)	-2"	-6"



CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS IV

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS

ARTWORK BY KENNON JAMES AND KYLE HUNTER • CARTOGRAPHY BY KYLÉ HUNTER

† Magic Items ➤ Monsters ⚔ NPCs 🗡 Objects 👑 Settlements ➤ Traps

“Challenge of Champions IV” is a D&D adventure for a party of four PCs of any level and any character class. Like the first three “Challenge of Champions” adventures (appearing in Issues #58, #69, and #80), this adventure takes place on the outskirts of a major city and can be inserted into nearly any campaign.

You should read the entire adventure before running it. A firm understanding of each of the ten scenarios is necessary for the smooth progress of the adventure and will help you adjudicate alternative solutions the players might devise to each challenge.

BACKGROUND

For the fourth year, the local Adventurers Guild is sponsoring an event to test the skills of teams of adventurers. The contest is open to adventuring teams of all levels of experience.

The contest is to be held in two days’ time at the edge of the city. Teams have already begun forming and registering for the contest. Some have gone through one or more of the previous Challenges of Champions, while others are new to the contest.

Each team must be registered at the guild headquarters in the city by sundown the night before the contest. The team members must each provide the guild with their name, character class (for record-keeping purposes only, since the scenarios are no longer geared toward specific character classes), and team name. They must also sign a form absolving the Adventurers Guild of any responsibility in case of injury or death. Contestants are given the opportunity to sign up in advance for either a *raise dead* spell (950 gp) or a *resurrection* spell (1,410 gp), to be used in the event of their death during the course of the Challenge. (The guild officials explain that the final

scenario is potentially lethal this year.) PCs wishing to use this service must pay in advance; the money is returned at the end of the event if they come through unscathed.

Finally, all contestants must pay the entrance fee of 5 gp unless they’re already guild members, in which case the fee is waived (a benefit of membership, as the guild is quick to point out). If the PCs aren’t yet members, they get to hear the standard sales pitch: For a mere 25 gp per year, the Adventurers Guild provides the PCs with a wealth of information, including beneficial contacts and a slight discount on standard adventuring gear. Other benefits can be added as you see fit. Possibilities include offering expendable magic items (scrolls and potions) at a reasonable cost, as well as providing a place to sell the various treasures recovered while adventuring.

The four winners of the contest are each granted a lifetime membership in the Adventurers Guild, as well as the trophies and prestige associated with such an honor.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

A team of four PCs enters the Challenge of Champions, a competition composed of ten scenarios testing their adventuring capabilities. At the end of the contest, the scores of all contestants are ranked to determine the winning team.

CHARACTER HOOKS

The PCs could enter the contest for several reasons. They might overhear other adventurers talking about the fourth annual Challenge of Champions and decide to enter on their own. One of their rivals

might form a team of contestants and dare the PCs to enter the contest to see which team performs better. If the PCs have already joined the Adventurers Guild, they might have competed in a previous Challenge and be eager to give it another go. A newly formed adventuring band might enter the Challenge to establish a reputation, possibly as advertisement for future employment.

FOR THE DM

The contest itself is a series of ten scenarios, each designed to test the resourcefulness and cohesion of the adventuring group. The scenarios are set up so as to be of equal difficulty to everyone, regardless of level. In other words, a 20th-level sorcerer should have no advantage over a 1st-level one. In addition, an attempt has been made to negate any advantage those contestants who went through previous Challenges of Champions might have over those who are experiencing the contest for the first time.

THE RULES

Team members must show up in regular clothing (armor is not permitted). Weapons cannot be brought to the contest grounds; those scenarios involving weapons have them prepositioned. The same goes for magic items of any type. Spellcasters cannot cast any spells they've prepared on their own; all spells used in the contest must be cast using the *rings of spell storing* provided as part of a scenario. This allows all spells to be cast at the same level, negating any advantage high-level spellcasters have over low-level ones. Contestants are not allowed to take items used in one scenario to any others. Those spellcasters with familiars are not allowed to bring them into the contest, nor can druids or rangers bring their animal companions.

All PCs are inspected by a guild wizard using *detect magic*, and those attempting to smuggle magic items into the contest are immediately disqualified. Likewise, the guild proctors have no qualms against ejecting contestants who try casting unauthorized spells during the scenarios. (Some spellcasters think they can sneak a spell past the proctors if they use their Silent Spell, Still Spell, and/or Quicken Spell metamagic feats. No one's managed to successfully pull it off yet, though.) Finally, the use of psionic powers is prohibited during the scenarios.

An unscrupulous adventuring group might devise an elaborate plan to circumvent the rules. For example, a group might plant one of their party members in an earlier group. When the spy makes it through the scenarios, he or she can use the *sending* spell to communicate the solution or clues (if the early

group didn't solve the scenario) to the later group. Such devious tactics shouldn't be "automatically" detected. If the PCs are clever enough to outsmart the Adventurers Guild's thorough precautions, they'll probably be seen as a boon to the organization anyway. If characters manage to pull off a cheat you didn't expect, try not to punish them outright. This is a contest of wits and ingenuity, and finding a novel way to circumvent tricky obstacles is part of what being an adventurer is all about.

A PC attempting to smuggle an illegal object into a scenario can make a Pick Pocket check opposed by the searching guild member's Search check, with a -4 penalty as all guild members are wary of such shenanigans. Items receive a bonus to the Pick Pockets check at determined by their size (+1 for Small, +2 for Tiny, +4 for Diminutive, and so on). PCs who cheat and are caught after the fact are removed from the Challenge and their points are nullified from all scenarios in which they participated. The remaining PCs are free to recruit a replacement member before continuing with the rest of the contest.

At the start of each scenario, the official (a member of the Adventurers Guild overseeing the proper operation of that particular scenario) briefs the team on the starting equipment they can use, and the team can inventory the items to ensure everything is in place. Command words to any magic items requiring them are normally provided at this time (unless determining the command word is part of the puzzle). Once the team is satisfied that all equipment is in place, the official begins reading the briefing, and the clock starts ticking. The briefing consists of the goal the team must try to accomplish, as well as any special rules for that scenario. The team has 15 minutes to accomplish each scenario.

THE HINT

A new addition to this year's Challenge of Champions is the introduction of "The Hint." If a team is stumped as to how to complete the goal of a given scenario, they can ask for "The Hint," and the guild proctor then reads them a prepared statement that should give them a clue as to how best to proceed. The team can ask for "The Hint" at any time during the scenario, but it must be a unanimous decision by all team members (or at least those team members who haven't been declared "dead" for that scenario). Once "The Hint" has been given, the team can earn a maximum of only half the normal points for completing the scenario goal (5 points per surviving character instead of the normal 10). In the unlikely event that one or more PCs successfully complete the scenario goal before the rest of the team decides to invoke "The Hint," they earn their full 10 points,

while those completing the goal after the reading of “The Hint” each receive 5 points. Note also that the specifics of “The Hint” for each scenario have already been decided by the guild proctors, and thus it’s possible that “The Hint” might address a part of the scenario that the contestants have already figured out on their own.

WHEN TO RUN THE ADVENTURE

If your players’ adventuring group does not have a full complement of four team members, the PCs can recruit one or more NPCs from the hopefuls milling about the contest. See the “Rounding Out the Team” sidebar for more information.

A word of caution: Although this adventure can be played with one DM and one player (with the player running all four team members), that puts the onus of coming up with solutions on the lone player. This isn’t unfeasible; it’s just easier to solve the scenarios with input and ideas from several people. The odds of a team doing well increases with the number of active players participating.

On the other hand, this adventure can be used on a night when some players can’t make it to the gaming session. Rather than have someone else run their characters in their absence or go on an adventure without their PCs as part of the team, you can split the four NPCs in the “Rounding Out the Team” sidebar between the players who are available and use them as a competing team. That way, those players who didn’t make it to the gaming session don’t have their PCs lagging behind in experience points.

RUNNING THE SCENARIOS

At the beginning of each scenario, show the players the map or diagram corresponding to that event (permission is granted to photocopy these player handouts for personal use only). Allow the players to read the appropriate spells in the *Player’s Handbook* and magic item entries in the *DUNGEON MASTER’S Guide*, but remind them that not all of the starting equipment is necessarily needed to complete each scenario’s goal. Once all of the players have had a chance to review their starting equipment, give them the task briefing. Once the briefing begins, track the time. The players have 15 minutes for their PCs to accomplish the task. This is 15 minutes in real time, not “game time.” (This system is much easier than tracking all 150 rounds in each 15-minute period for each of the 10 scenarios.) However, some tasks the PCs must perform to complete a scenario goal take a bit of time, and for those tasks the approximate time to complete them is provided, often with a modifier, under the heading “Time Constraints.” Whenever a

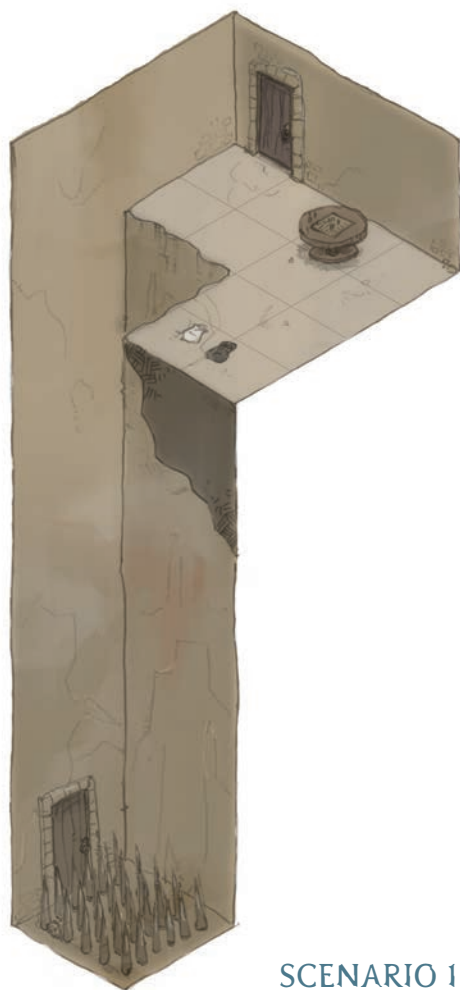
player announces that her PC is performing that task, determine the length of time it takes and subtract that from the 15 minutes of the scenario. For example, if it takes 30 seconds to secure a rope properly, tell the players that time has been used.

The “school solution” is provided to each scenario. This is the way the designers at the Adventurers Guild anticipate the goal will be accomplished. However, it is by no means the only, or even the best, way to complete the scenario. It is provided so you can see one method to accomplish each goal, in the event the PCs fail to accomplish it and the players don’t think it can be done. Be flexible in all cases, and allow a good idea an appropriate chance of success. Some avenues of approach are not good methods to employ, however, and many specific “bad ideas” are provided as examples of what won’t work.

The guild official proctoring each scenario is responsible for ensuring the safety of its participants. While many of the scenarios place the contestants in danger of physical harm, the official has been provided with a means of countering that danger; for example, several scenarios involve climbing up or down sheer surfaces, and the guild wizards proctoring those scenarios are ready to cast *feather fall* immediately upon signs of trouble.

Other dangers are more artificial, like falling into a pool of “lava.” In any scenario, the official has the power to declare any PC “dead” at any time, and he does so if he has to save the PC or if the PC commits a “lethal” act (like falling into “lava”). PCs who have been declared “dead” are not allowed to participate further in the scenario in which they “died,” and they receive no points for that scenario. They are allowed to watch their teammates finish the scenario without them, but any assistance on their part, whether it be actual participation in accomplishing the scenario’s goal or even shouting suggestions from the sidelines (this includes the “dead” character’s player offering advice to the other players) are grounds for disqualification of the entire team. Once the team moves on to the next scenario, any “dead” PCs are restored to “living” status and continue as before.

Many of the scenarios are puzzles. As part of the spirit of the Challenge of Champions, you should require your players to figure out the solution themselves. After all, figuring out the solutions is the whole point of these scenarios. However, most people roleplay to play their characters, not themselves; the PCs have “lived” entirely different lives and have memories of entirely different experiences than the players. In each scenario, some potential uses for skills are provided if your players begin to get frustrated or they ask you whether one of their skill might help. Skill checks are generally



SCENARIO 1

unnecessary to successfully complete a scenario, but they can help give PCs a clue.

As the PCs complete each scenario, record their scores on the score sheet provided. This makes it easier for the players to see how they are doing, and more importantly, lets you tally the final scores when the fourth annual Challenge of Champions is over.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players when their characters are ready to begin:

The day of the contest, the teams are led to the large, multicolored tent where the initial briefings are given. This year, there are a total of 15 teams competing. Before the contest officially begins, some of the teams pass around a sign-up sheet for a betting pool. Not all teams have entered the pool, and there is no pressure to do so, but those interested are putting up 100 gold pieces per team, and the winners (among those in the pool) go home with the pot. "This year, I'm sure to win," declares

Bisquayne, a long-time competitor, as he hands you the sign-up sheet for the betting pool. "Care to contribute to my winnings?"

The betting pool has become a tradition among many of the Challenge of Champions competitors. Since the Adventurers Guild has no interest in providing monetary rewards for winning (that's not why they've designed the contests), several contestants have taken it upon themselves to provide their own cash reward. The betting pool serves as a sort of "back-up prize" as well—even if the PCs don't win the contest this time around, there's a chance they might at least get to take home some money. So far, nine of the teams have each put in 100 gp, so if the PCs decide to enter, the pot will be 1,000 gp. Of course, since the contestants aren't allowed to bring anything with them to the contest, none of the teams actually have the money with them, but the other teams help ensure that the losers pay up when the contest is over. Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs have had a chance to interact with some of the other contestants and made a decision whether to participate in the betting pool:

Farthingale, the heavy-set guildmaster officially running the Challenge of Champions, shows up at the tent and everyone gets down to business. Farthingale goes over all of the ground rules and answers any initial questions. After that, each team's name is entered on a slip of paper, and the names are drawn randomly out of a small chest to determine the order in which the teams will compete. Your team is number ten.

At this point, go over all of the rules with the players and answer any questions they might have. Once the players are ready to proceed, and assuming none of the PCs plan on smuggling illicit items into the contest, read or paraphrase the following:

Team #1 is led away to start. You are left to wait until your team's turn; with over 2 hours to kill, you amuse yourselves by wandering through the guild's display tents, examining various weapons, armor, and adventuring gear. Everywhere you go, people offer you their best wishes in the upcoming event. Finally, you are approached by a guild page. "It's about that time," he says, and escorts you to the starting tent. Inside, you are greeted by two guild members: a thin-faced wizard named Kuthbar, who casts *detect magic* on your team in search of illicit magic items, and a red-bearded fighter named Jayme, who gives everyone a thorough frisk, looking for smuggled items like lockpicks.

If any of the PCs have tried sneaking forbidden items into the contest, they're probably discovered at this point (see "Rules" above for information on how to conceal hidden items) and ejected from the Challenge without being reimbursed their entrance fees. (Money paid in advance for *resurrection* or *raise dead* spells is returned, however.) Allow guild officials time to take 20 on Search checks, and don't be afraid to give them hefty circumstance bonuses. A player whose PC is ejected can use one of the four extra PCs in the "Rounding Out the Team" sidebar instead of his normal character. This also allows the other team members (those who didn't try to cheat) to compete in the Challenge rather than be disqualified along with their foolish partner.

Read or paraphrase the boxed text for the first scenario when the PCs are ready to begin.

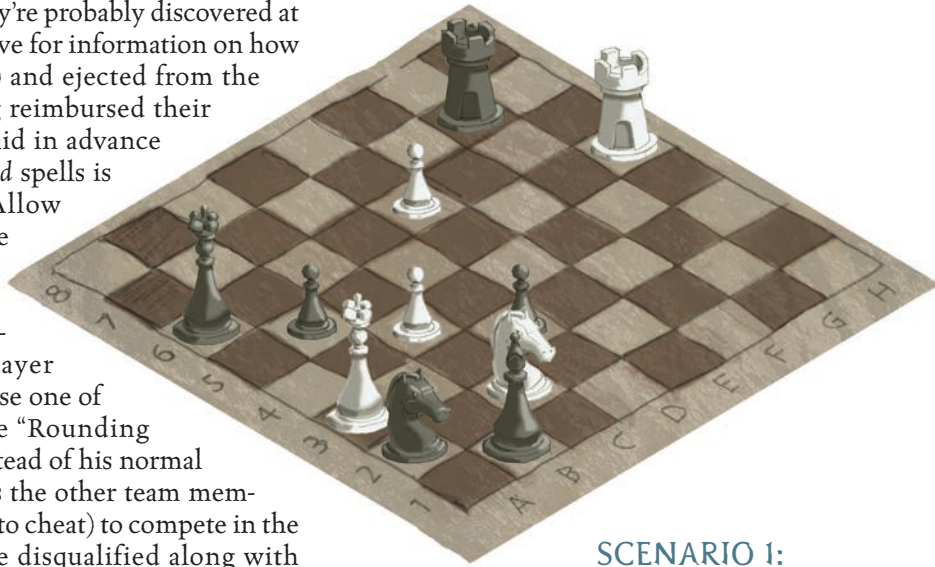
SCENARIO #1: CHESS, ANYONE?

Jayne leads you through a door and into a 20-foot-square room. A 10-foot-square pit occupies one corner and a round chess table, some 4 feet wide, the other. There you are met by Julian, the guild wizard in charge of the first scenario. "Good day to you," he says. "Your starting equipment consists of two bags in the corner: one black, one white. One is a *bag of devouring*, the other a *bag of holding* (type I). It's up to you to determine which is which, but the *bag of holding* contains an *immovable rod* and a 10-foot length of rope. Both should prove useful in accomplishing your task: namely, getting safely to the bottom of the 50-foot-deep pit.

"The sides of the pit are completely smooth, so any attempt to climb down is sure to end in failure. Also, please note the spikes at the bottom of the pit, which we've taken the liberty of coating with a deadly contact poison. If you can get down there safely, you should be able to walk carefully around the spikes, but I wouldn't advise just jumping in. In fact, I can pretty much guarantee that anyone jumping in without a way of slowing their fall will be declared dead for the rest of the scenario."

"If you don't feel up to the challenge, perhaps you'd rather spend the next 15 minutes playing a quick game of chess? No? Then you may begin."

The room and pit are both lit by *continual flame* spells. The 4-foot-diameter chess table is wooden and supported by a single, sturdy, central leg. The chess-



SCENARIO 1: PLAYER'S HANDOUT

board is painted on the tabletop, with the pieces set up as if in the middle of a game (see accompanying diagram). Neither of the two magical bags bears any distinguishing marks.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the exit door at the bottom of the pit by the end of the time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs observe the placement of the chess pieces on the board, reading off each piece of the same color in sequence, from low numbers to high. The black pieces spell out the words "bad bag," while the white pieces spell out "cache." The PCs open the white *bag of holding* and remove the *immovable rod* and the rope. Tying the rod securely to the side of the table leg, one PC holds the chess table over the edge of the pit and activates the *immovable rod*. While the table hangs motionless in midair above the pit, one PC climbs onto the table's leg, sitting cross-legged, while the other three PCs pile onto the top of the table. The PC on the leg deactivates and reactivates the *immovable rod* in short bursts, allowing the table to drop only a few feet at a time, and the PCs make it to the bottom of the pit in that fashion. Once at the bottom of the pit, they carefully make their way past the spikes and out the door.

The walls are smooth enough to be considered unclimbable (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 65).

THE HINT

"There is a clue in the placement of the chess pieces."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

It takes 2 rounds to tie the *immovable rod* securely to the leg of the chess table with the rope (or to tie any two items together). It takes about 1 minute 30 seconds to descend the pit on the table as described. Time spent deciphering the hidden message on the chessboard should be accounted literally.

DM NOTES

When the PCs open either of the two magic bags, nothing can be seen inside. Similarly, turning the *bags* over to “dump” their contents has no effect; it’s only when a PC reaches into a *bag* that they’ll know which *bag* is which (unless they solve the clues hidden in the chessmen’s locations on the board). A PC reaching into the *bag of devouring* is pulled into the bag and declared “dead” for the rest of the scenario. (Actually, both bags are really *bags of holding*, but the black one—the “*bag of devouring*”—has a guild wizard positioned inside it, ready to pull in any PC who reaches inside the bag.) Of course, once a team member has been “devoured,” it should be obvious to the other players that the white bag is the one they want.

If the PCs think to turn the bags inside out (and do so without reaching a hand inside the “*bag of devouring*”), the contents spill out of the *bag of holding* and are accessible for use. The black *bag* spills out the guild wizard hidden inside, but he wears a *ring of invisibility* and instantly *teleports* out of the chamber with a spell readied with the Silent Spell feat.

The rope is only 10 feet long—long enough to tie the *immovable rod* in place but little use in climbing down the 50-foot-deep pit.

A monk of 8th level or higher can use her slow fall ability to jump down the pit without harm; by keeping in touch with the wall of the pit, she’ll avoid landing on a spike, which are clustered toward the center. This, of course, allows her to earn 10 points for the scenario but does nothing toward aiding her teammates. Anyone else jumping (or falling) into the pit has a *feather fall* spell cast upon them by Julian and is declared “dead” for the rest of the scenario—a victim of the poisoned spikes. This includes clever PCs who try climbing into the *bag of holding* and having another team member drop them into the pit; in such cases, the guild proctor declares the *bag of holding* (it holds up to 250 pounds) pierced by a spike and ruptured, destroying its contents and causing anyone inside it at the time to achieve “dead” status. Note that occupants who do not exceed the *bag’s* 250-pound cargo limit can hold their breaths and ride down in the bag using the tactic described in the solution. Naturally, the spikes aren’t really coated in poison, nor are they even really there; they are *permanent images* cast by guild wizards.

If the PCs are unable to get safely to the bottom of the pit within 15 minutes, Julian casts *feather fall* on them and pushes them over the edge of the pit. They earn no points for the first scenario and are sent on to the second.

SCENARIO #2: HELL TO PAY

Walking through the door at the bottom of the pit, you are met by a guild rogue named Luther who escorts you down a corridor to the next scenario. “You just descended down one pit,” he declares. “For the next scenario, the goal is to climb out of another.” You enter the door at the far end of the corridor and step into a 20-foot-square room with a prominent magic circle etched into the floor. All sorts of magical symbols surround the circle, and five burning candles provide the illumination. Luther locks the door behind him.

“Okay, here’s the situation,” he explains. “You’re in the unenviable position of being at the bottom of this 30-foot-deep pit, where an evil necromancer performs his unholy rituals. Fifteen minutes from now, an osyluth devil will appear in the middle of the magic circle and receive his payment for prior services rendered. The payment consists of 500 pieces of gold, kept in one of these unlocked chests”—here Luther indicates two small treasure chests lined up against one wall—“as well as four metal flasks of *sovereign glue*, kept in the other chest. Oh, and of course anyone still in this room when he appears. I’d do my best to make sure that you’re not here when the barbed devil shows up, as his appetite is noteworthy. Of course, judging from the smoothness of these walls, climbing them is going to be difficult at best. Still, see what you can do. Good luck!”

The room is illuminated by five burning candles spaced equidistant around the 18-foot-diameter magic circle etched into the floor. In addition, some light spills from the top of the pit.

The two chests are identical—each 2 feet long, 1 foot deep, and 1 foot tall. The room has no ceiling.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it up and out of the room by the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs open the chests and pour the gold pieces on the floor. They open up the vials of *sovereign glue*, drip a drop onto each coin in turn and stack them onto each other, making stacks of 50 coins. A pile of 50 coins glued together forms a cylinder a little

SCENARIO 2

over 6 inches long; ten coin cylinders can be produced from the golden trove.

The PCs then use the *sovereign glue* to adhere one of the chests upside-down to the side of one of the walls as high up as they can reach. Getting a boost up from his companions, PC #1 steps onto the makeshift platform thus created. The other PCs pass up the other chest and the “coin cylinders,” and PC #1 uses the *sovereign glue* to adhere them to the wall as well, creating another platform out of the second chest and a series of handholds and footholds that allow the PCs to climb up the wall and over the top.

The walls of the pit are unclimbable, as they were in Scenario #1.

THE HINT

“You might not have a ladder, but at least you have the rungs.”

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Assume it takes 1 second to glue coins together per coin involved, so gluing all 500 coins into “rungs” of a set length takes 500 seconds, or 8 minutes, 20 seconds. Of course, there are four vials of *sovereign glue* and four PCs, so with two PCs at work gluing coins together, it takes 4 minutes, 10 seconds; three PCs can do complete the task in 2 minutes, 47 seconds; four PCs take 2 minutes, 5 seconds. It takes a full round for the *sovereign glue* to set, but this occurs while other coins are being glued to the top of a stack; by the time all of the rungs are ready to be used, the *sovereign glue* will have set.

When gluing the “ladder” into place along the wall, assume it takes 1 round to glue a “rung” (whether a stack of glued coins or a chest) in place and another to climb up onto it. Thus, it takes the PC doing the gluing 24 rounds (2 minutes, 24 seconds) to form a “ladder” of twelve rungs. The other PCs can then climb up at half their speed (see the Climb skill rules on pages 64–65 of the *Player’s Handbook*).

Thus, if only one PC assembles the “rungs” together, he can be out of the pit in a total of 10 minutes, 44 seconds. The other PCs would then climb up at half their normal movement rates. If there were two characters building rungs, the first PC could be out of the pit in 6 minutes, 34 seconds after he first started gluing the



coins together.

With three PCs assembling rungs, the first PC leaves the pit after 5 minutes, 11 seconds.

With all four PCs assisting in the “rung assembly line,” it takes 4 minutes, 29 seconds for the first PC to climb out of the pit.

DM NOTES

Be sure to note how many “rungs” the PCs make, and ask the players how high they’re gluing each “rung.” With careful planning, they won’t run out of “rungs” before they reach the top of the pit.

PCs using shorter “coin-rungs” (for example, if they opt to make 50 “rungs” of only 10 coins each) might require a Climb skill check (DC 10) to climb to the top. Failure by 5 or more points signifies that they fall off, taking 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.

At the end of the time limit, an osyluth materializes in the middle of the magic circle, as promised. (Again, it’s just a *polymorphed* guild wizard.) If the PCs haven’t exited the room by then, he points to each in turn and says, “Okay, you’re dead, and you’re dead, and you’re dead, and you’re dead,” then flies them,

SCENARIO 3



one at a time, to the top of the pit. The PCs earn no points for this scenario and are sent to the next.

Levitating Adventurers Guild workers use *universal solvent* at the end of each team's passage through Scenario #2 to restore the starting equipment to its original condition and location before the next adventuring team begins this scenario.

SCENARIO #3: ARE THOSE TEETH REAL?

Exiting the second scenario, you are met by a guild wizard named Mussfinch. "The next scenario calls for you to split up," he informs you. "I'll need you to designate yourselves as team members 1, 2, 3, and 4."

Once you've decided who's who, he continues: "You'll each be taken to a different platform along

the four corners of a large room, where you'll each find a single potion vial. I won't tell you which potion is which—that's for you to figure out—but one is a *potion of spider climb*, one's a *potion of blur*, one's a *potion of water walk*, and the last is a vial of poison. Do please be careful, will you? That poison is lethal. One of you will also begin with a 10-foot length of rope, and another with an *immovable rod*. You'll find out who gets what once you're each on your platform.

"Your goal for this scenario is to make it up to and through the small opening in the ceiling of the room. The ceiling is 20 feet above your starting platforms.

"Oh, one final thing: You'll find the platforms are 20 feet above the floor of the room, and with good reason: There's a nasty gibbering mouther with snapping teeth lurking down there. As you might expect, anyone falling down there with it will be declared dead. Since the babbling of a gibbering mouther can drive a person insane, here are four sets of earplugs. For your own safety, please keep them in for the duration of the scenario. Since you won't be able to talk to each other with earplugs in, if you want the hint, get on your knees and hold your hands together in a penitent fashion. If I see all four of you in such a position, I'll provide the hint telepathically. Ready? Begin!"

The room is 20 feet wide, 20 feet long, and 40 feet high. The starting platforms are at the midway point between floor and ceiling, and each platform has a 3-foot-high metal railing preventing the PCs from falling off. A gibbering mouther sits in a blob on the floor, gnashing its many teeth. In the middle of the ceiling is a 5-foot-square opening. The room is lit by *continual flame* spells.

Each PC starts with a different-colored potion vial stoppered with a cork, upon which are written three letters as shown below. PC #1 also begins with an *immovable rod* (clearly labeled along its side), and PC #2 has a 10-foot length of rope.

PC	Color of Vial	Letters on Cork
#1	white	R A T

#2	pink	A L L
#3	silver	I O N
#4	blue	I T E

Important Note: As the PCs' ears are sealed with earplugs, the players cannot talk to each other during this scenario. They'll have to use gestures, sign language, and anything else they can improvise.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the ceiling opening by the end of the 15-minute time period.

SOLUTION

The PCs each make known the three letters on their potion-vial corks. (Various methods for doing this are described below under "DM Notes.") Placing the

letters together in the proper order forms the word "alliteration." Using this clue, PC #3 quaffs the silver *potion of spider climb*, removes any footgear, and walks along the walls to each of the other PCs in turn and carries them to the opening in the ceiling.

The walls, floor, and ceiling are all smooth and unclimbable.

THE HINT

Since the PCs can't hear Mussfinch while they're wearing their earplugs, he holds up a sign reading "ALLITERATION."

DM NOTES

A PC cannot let others know what's written on her vial by simply showing the cork to them; the letters

ROUNDING OUT THE TEAM

If the PCs are short a teammate or two, they can meet up with any of the four PCs described here. These extra PCs are 1st-level characters who have avoided signing up together as a team because they fear they don't have the experience needed to perform well in the contest. Each one would be more than willing to join a more experienced party, though.

Feel free to use these extra PCs to fill out the party for the purpose of this adventure; once the adventure is over they can either stay on as NPCs or go their separate ways, as best fits your campaign. In any case, you shouldn't use the extra PCs to provide input during the scenarios. The contest is designed to challenge the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the players, so no help should be forthcoming from you via these extra characters.

🧙 **Darvin, Male Half-elf Sor1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d4+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); SA spells; SQ half-elf qualities; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; AL CG; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +5, Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Spellcraft +7, Spot +3. **Feats:** Toughness.

Darvin has a tendency to spout an endless stream of disgusting jokes, especially "dead kobold" jokes. Despite his quirky sense of humor, he's dependable and forthright.

🧙 **Mirkysh, Male Gnome Brd1:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (3 ft. 5 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); SA spells, bardic music; SQ gnome qualities, bardic knowledge; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; AL NG; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: (24) Alchemy +8*, Appraise +4, Diplomacy +4, Hide +9*, Listen +7*, Perform (buffoonery, comedy, melody, storytelling) +7. **Feats:** Dodge.

*Skill totals include all racial and size bonuses.

Khrys is a friendly gnome with a shaved head who enjoys performing in taverns and pubs. Khrys's vocal performances always improve after a few mugs of brew.

🧙 **Bhessy, Femal Half-Orc Bbn1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d12+1; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); SA rage; SQ half-orc qualities; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CN; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +3, Jump +7. **Feats:** Power Attack.

Bhessy has a willingness to use fists as the cure-all solution to life's dilemmas. She's especially sensitive about her name, and she'll jump down the throat of the first person to make a cow joke in her hearing.

🧙 **Waresh, Female Dwarf Rog1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (4 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ dwarf qualities; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -1; AL N; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

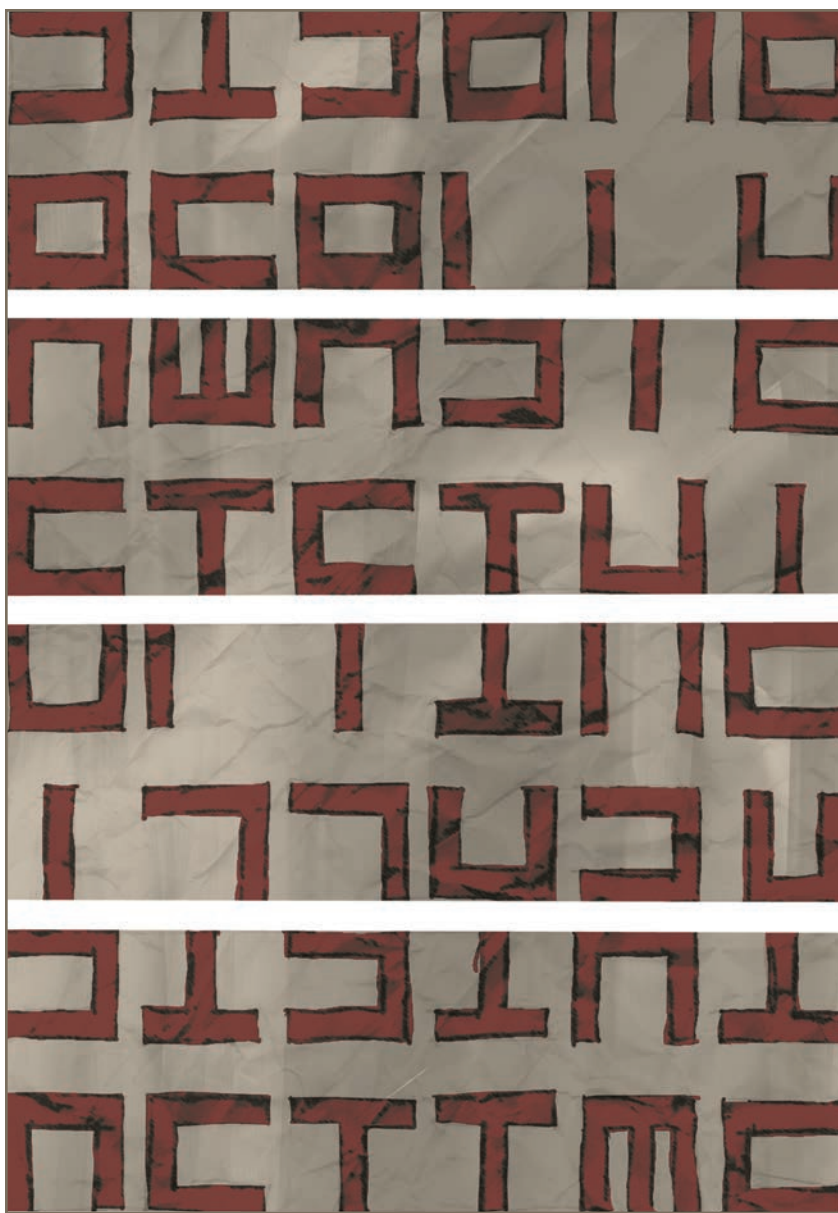
Skills: (32) Appraise +2*, Climb +4, Craft +2* (for stone or metal items only), Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Pick Pocket +6, Search +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Endurance.

*Skill totals include all racial bonuses.

Waresh the dwarf has numerous facial piercings that make her look more intimidating. They include her nose, both ears (multiple times each), eyebrows, lower lip, and tongue. Watters scowls frequently but is really a big softy.

The statistics above describe the four extra PCs as they appear for the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. If you wish to make them permanent additions to the party, you'll have to outfit them with weapons, armor, spells, and the like, but these concerns are outside the scope of this adventure.

SCENARIO 4: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



are too small to make out from 20 feet away. One solution is to write the letters in the air with a finger.

Throwing a vial (or its cork) to another PC requires a successful ranged attack against AC 10 on the part of the thrower and a successful Dexterity check (DC 10) on the part of the catcher. If either roll fails, the thrown object falls to the floor below and is lost.

Lip-reading the letters spoken by another PC is possible with a successful Read Lips check (DC 15). If this works, have the speaker write down his or her three letters on a scrap of paper and pass it to the lip-reader so the other players don't also gain the information.)

Note that if you have fewer than four players running the four-person team, each player should only be provided the letters on one cork until such time as the PCs manage to communicate with each other. Finally,

be sure you don't ruin the silence effect yourself by writing the letters down or reading them aloud to each player. Small pieces of paper with each letter combination written on them can be used to circumvent this danger.

If none of the above methods works, the PCs can always travel to each other and compare vials. PC #1 can stand on the railing at the eastern edge of his or her platform with the *immovable rod* in hand and jump toward PC #2, activating it when he or she begins to fall. (Refer to the Jump skill on page 70 of the *Player's Handbook*; the PCs can only make standing jumps due to the size of the platforms.) PC #2 makes a lasso at one end of the rope and throws it to PC #1, who maneuvers it over the activated *immovable rod*. PC #2 ties the other end to the railing if desired. PC #1 deactivates the *rod* and is pulled up onto PC #2's platform, where the two can compare vials. PC #1 then jumps toward PC #4, activates the *immovable rod* in mid-air, and throws the end of the rope to PC #4, who then secures the rope and hauls PC #1 over in the manner described above. The same system is used to get PC #1 over to PC #3.

The alliteration clue refers to the first letter of the potion type and the color of the vial. Thus, *blur* goes with blue, *poison* with pink, *spider climb* with silver, and *water walk* with white. All of the potions' effects function as though cast at 5th level.

Any PC who drinks the vial of poison is declared dead for the rest of the scenario. Fortunately, the "poison" is not truly lethal (despite its terrible taste). In addition, anyone removing their earplugs is declared dead. While gibbering mouther normally cause *confusion* and not death, this was one of the constraints of the scenario.

The gibbering mouther is, in fact, a *polymorphed* guild wizard. It does not attack with the typical gibbering mouther attacks but makes a big show of snapping its teeth at the PCs. Mussfinch casts *feather fall* on any PC who falls toward the floor; that PC is declared dead for the rest of the scenario,

and any equipment carried is also out of reach of the other PCs.

A *dispel magic* removes the lingering effects of any potions before the PCs move on to the next scenario.

SCENARIO #4: EYE FOR AN EYE

"You've made it this far," says Scarrolupio, the guild wizard proctoring the fourth scenario. "Now you must do a bit of climbing." He leads you toward a large totem pole, carved into which are four iconic images of animals. The totem pole rises up from a sand pit, stands about 40 feet tall, and is placed near a wall of similar size.

"You see carved before you representations of various beasts of legend. Your goal is twofold: First, you must remove the top beast's left eye and replace it with this"—here he hands you a globe of red glass. "Second, you must each make your way to the top of the totem pole, where you can step off to the top of the wall and proceed to the next scenario. There's a set of stairs on the other side of the wall. Note, however, the extreme smoothness of this side of the wall; I can guarantee that none of you will be climbing up it. No, climbing the totem pole is the way to go, and just to make it interesting, we've taken the

liberty of greasing the pole, making it unclimbable without help of some sort. Fortunately, you'll find a 50-foot length of rope at the top, so climbing up should be significantly easier for the last three team members."

Scarrolupio pulls a set of four cards from inside his robe, as well as a small hand mirror. The cards each have runes along their longer sides. "You might need these," Scarrolupio says. "There is a secret message in this scenario that could make your task considerably easier, if you can figure out what it says."



SCENARIO 4: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



This entire area is lit with *continual flame* spells. The totem pole is 40 feet tall and 5 feet from a 40-foot-tall, unclimbable wall.

Important Note: You should present the players with the four "coded message cards" at the beginning of this scenario. You should also provide them with a small mirror, so they'll have everything their PCs have while attempting to decipher the hidden message.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it to the platform at the top of the totem pole within the 15-minute time limit, provided the eye has been removed and replaced with the red glass orb.

SOLUTION

The PCs ignore the cards and look to the totem pole itself for the real hidden message: The four animal totems depicted on the pole are comprised of reflected letters (when read sideways) that form the words “break mirror.” The PCs break the mirror, which causes a 40-foot ladder to fall out of an extradimensional space inside. This enables the PCs to place the ladder against the totem pole, braced at the bottom so it doesn’t slip away, and climb to the top to switch the eyes. The PCs can then place the ladder against the wall and climb up over the top.

THE HINT

“Ignore the cards.”

DM NOTES

The four coded message cards and the mirror are an attempt to lead astray those who have participated in previous challenges and try to use those experiences to their advantage. (In earlier Challenges of Champions, similar coded messages are reflected in a mirror to spell out clues, and other scenarios have hinged upon the secret message revealed when placing “coded message” cards together in their proper order.) This time around, some of the “hidden words” have been placed upside-down in relationship to the others, but regardless the cards are not necessary for the scenario’s completion. In fact, the message formed by the cards is:

THIS IS (inverted Card D over inverted Card B)

REALLY (Card A over inverted Card C)

A WASTE (inverted Card A over Card B)

OF TIME (Card D over Card C)

PCs are free to try to climb the totem pole without the rope, but the grease on the totem pole makes it unclimbable.

Once at the top of the totem pole, removing and replacing the glass eye is a simple matter.

If PCs get close to making the leap of looking to the totem pole for clues (such as by looking at the pole reflected in the mirror, or simply

examining the pole closely), allow them a Spot check (DC 20). PCs can take 20 on this roll, but it costs them 2 minutes. If the check succeeds, feel free to give them a clue, such as, “You see something strange in the totem pole. It almost look like the creatures carved into the pole have another shape.” If PCs specifically say they’re looking for a written clue in the totem pole, allow them a Decipher Script check (DC 20) or a Search check (DC 25). PCs can take 20 on these checks, but doing so takes 2 minutes, which should be subtracted from their total time limit.

SCENARIO #5: ELF HIVE

“Tired of climbing up and down yet?” asks Justin, the gruff guild fighter proctoring the next scenario.

SCENARIO 3: PLAYER’S HANDOUT

"Well, you'll like this next scenario, then, 'cause it's all on the same level—no climbing involved. Here, gather 'round, and I'll tell you what's up."

Justin leads you around a corner to the starting area of the fifth scenario. Ahead of you is a narrow passageway with a floor constructed of hex-shaped stones. At the far end stand two statues of peculiar hybrid creatures with the eyes, wings, and bodies of bees, and the upper torsos and heads of elves. Each statue holds a drawn bow aimed in your direction. "Screw you looking things, huh?" remarks Justin. "Well, they're the guardians of this here elf hive, and they'll kill you if you step outta line."

"Here's the deal: This section of corridor is filled with magic traps, see? Them tiles are all pressure sensitive, so them guardian thingies can tell where everybody is. Only one person on a hex—that's the rule. Break the rule and you're dead. Also, some of them tiles have got bee-elf larva growin' under 'em, and the guardians don't like it when you step on a grub. So step on a grub hex, and you're dead."

"Fortunately, all them hexes detect as magical. If you step on a safe hex, a number'll appear in the middle of the hex. That shows how many grubs lurk under hexes next to the one you're standing on. Remember now, there's only one grub under each of them grub hexes, so if a '2' pops up on a hex, it means two of the hexes touching that one's got grubs under 'em. Got it? Right then. To make it easy on you, all of them first hexes is safe to stand on, I'll tell you that much."

"One final thing: Four of the hexes have magic keys on 'em. You can't see 'em 'cause they're invisible right now, but each key will appear when you stand on the hex it rests on. You each have to get yer own key, 'cause you each need to be holdin' a key to pass by the statues at the end of the hive. You got that? Then let's go!"

The entire area is lit by *continual flame* spells. The hex tiles are each 5 feet in diameter. The walls in the corridor are completely smooth, foiling all climbing attempts.

SCORING

10 points per PC who gets past the statues within the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs each stand on a different hex at the front of the hive, note the numbers on the hexes they're standing on, and use logic to determine which hexes are safe to step on. They make their way across the hive in such a fashion, picking up the keys as they come across them, and each PC passes to safety with a key in hand.

THE HINT

"Once you've determined where all the grubs are, adjacent to a given hex, all the other hexes adjacent to that one are safe."

SCENARIO 3: SOLUTION

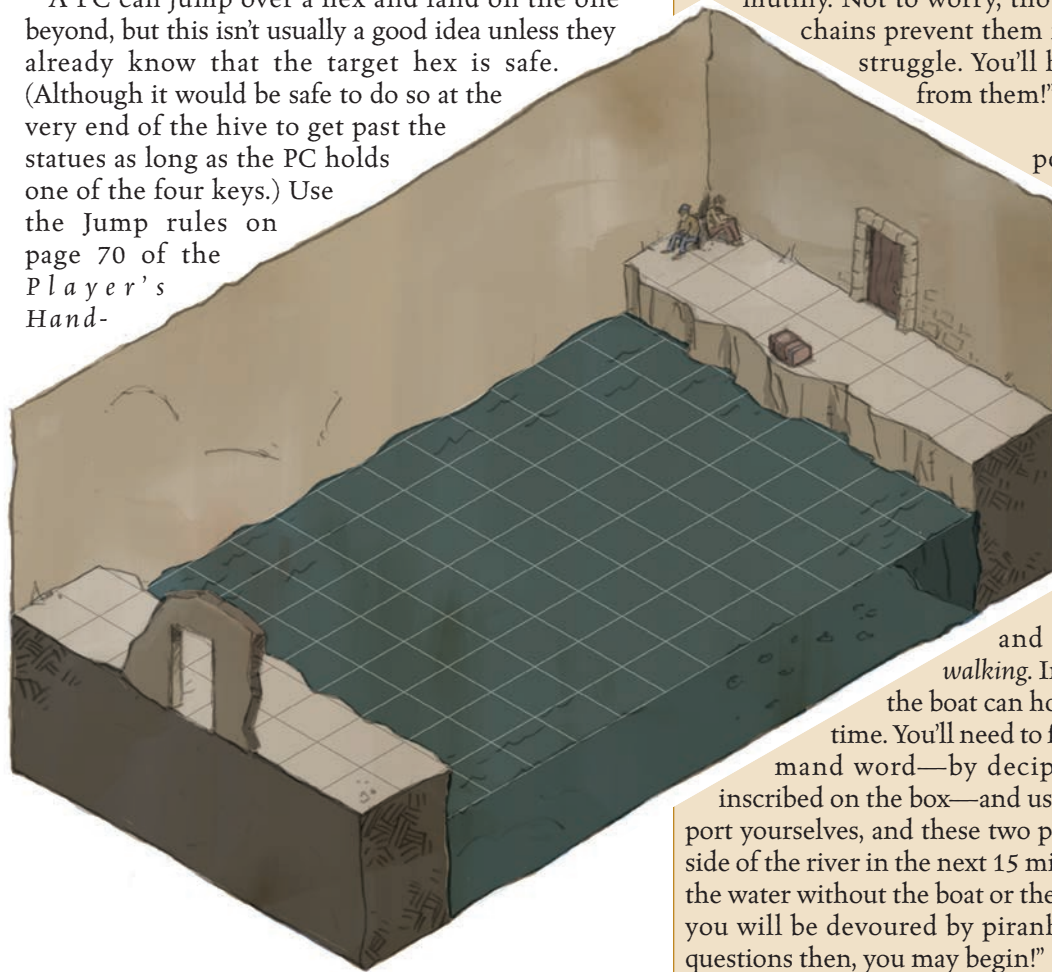


DM NOTES

There are two scenario maps: The first one is for the DM, showing the location of the grubs, the keys, and the numbers that appear on each hex. The second (blank) map is for the players, so they can fill in the numbers on the hexes as their PCs step on them. Have each player tell you the location of their PC on the hexes, and tell them what number appears when they step onto a safe hex (or describe how they're "vaporized" when they step onto a "grub" hex).

If a PC steps onto a "grub" hex, or multiple PCs stand on a single hex, the statues fire bolts of magic energy (resembling *magic missiles*) at the offenders, automatically striking them. PCs struck are instantly rendered invisible, magically silenced, and telekinetically levitated through the illusory ceiling of the room. To the other PCs, it appears as though their teammates were disintegrated. If the "vaporized" PC was carrying a key, it is also lost. Naturally, "vaporized" PCs are declared dead for the rest of the scenario. Stepping onto a "grub" hex does not clear it; anyone stepping onto the same hex later is also "vaporized" by the statues.

A PC can jump over a hex and land on the one beyond, but this isn't usually a good idea unless they already know that the target hex is safe. (Although it would be safe to do so at the very end of the hive to get past the statues as long as the PC holds one of the four keys.) Use the Jump rules on page 70 of the *Player's Handbook*.



book to determine the success of a jump.

Once a key has been used to get past the two statues, it is rendered nonmagical. Thus, it cannot be passed back to another PC to allow him or her safe passage. Each of the PCs must use a different key.

SCENARIO #6: SEASICK SAILORS

You are met by Father Quespin, another guild cleric. "Good day, Team Ten," he says, leading you through a door and into the area where the next scenario is held. This one involves water: A 100-foot-long pool stretches from wall to wall. "The water," says Father Quespin, "represents a piranha-filled river. The goal this time is simple," he says. He indicates a pair of young men in sailors' garb, both of whom look rather ill. They are shackled together at the wrist by a 6-foot chain. "You must transport these two seasick sailors, and yourselves, to the far side of the river. I'm afraid the sailors are not in any condition to assist you, so you'll have to do all of the work. Nor would they help you in any case, for they're being sent to trial for attempted mutiny. Not to worry, though: Those magic chains prevent them from putting up a struggle. You'll have no problems from them!"

Father Quespin points out your starting equipment: a small wooden box, upon which are inscribed several words and an outer ring of miscellaneous letters. "This box is a *folding boat*," he explains. "It currently holds four rings: Three nonmagical rings and one *ring of water walking*. In its rowboat form, the boat can hold four people at a time. You'll need to figure out the command word—by deciphering the clues inscribed on the box—and use the boat to transport yourselves, and these two prisoners, to the far side of the river in the next 15 minutes. If you enter the water without the boat or the magic of the ring, you will be devoured by piranha. If there are no questions then, you may begin!"

SCENARIO 6

SCENARIO 6: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



This scenario takes place in a large, open-air arena and thus has natural lighting. The pool of water is a uniform 10 feet deep.

SCORING

10 points per PC on the far side of the river at the end of the 15-minute time limit, but only if the two seasick sailors have been transported there as well.

SOLUTION

The PCs examine the inscription carved into the box, which reads "Come, human, die by sword or spear." Examining the nineteen letters in the outer ring circling the inscription, the PCs note that all of the letters of the alphabet are represented except for B, E, H, I, S, U, and Y. Removing those letters from the phrase in the inscription above reveals "COMMAND WORD ORPAR." When the word "orpar" is spoken aloud, the box unfolds to form a rowboat (10 feet long, 4 feet wide, 2 feet deep) with a single pair of oars. Two PCs ferry the sailors to the other side of the river, then one returns to fetch the other two PCs.

THE HINT

"If the letter's not in the ring, it's not in the middle."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Rowing the boat across the river requires a successful Strength check (DC 10). Two PCs can each take an oar, with one PC assisting the other's Strength check

(use the Aid Another rule on page 135 of the *Player's Handbook*). PCs can also take 10 on this check, if they desire. The boat has a speed of 10 feet per round. Crossing the river with the ring is probably faster, since most PCs have higher speeds than the boat. An average human (speed 30 feet) can run across the river in a single round.

DM NOTES

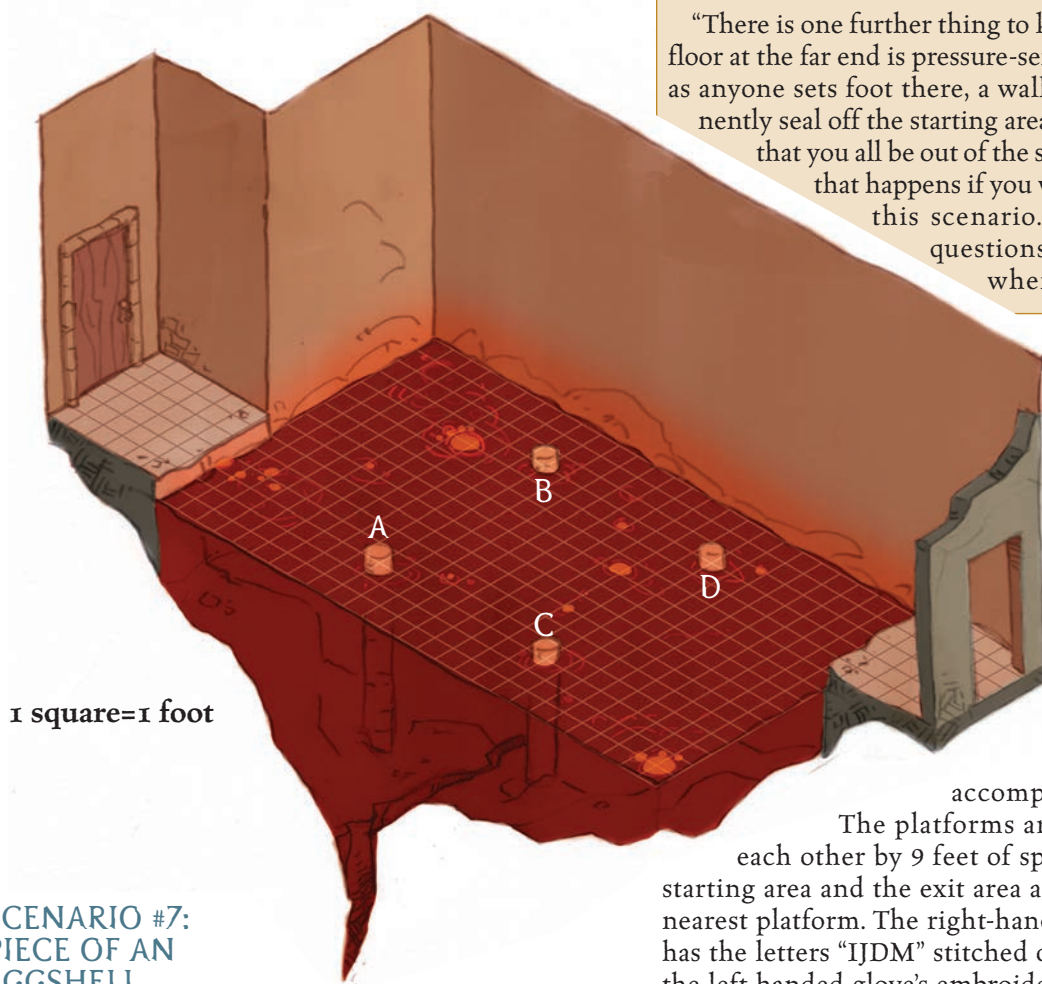
At the end of the time limit, only those PCs on the far side of the river earn points, and then only if both sailors have been shuttled across. It's in the team's best interest to get both sailors across in the first trip, so if they run out of time, at least one PC earns her points. (If there isn't enough time to return to the starting shore, pick up the remaining two PCs, and make it across again before the end of the time limit, it's actually a better strategy to "abandon" the last two teammates and earn 20 points for the team.)

The PCs can also accomplish their goal in a single trip. Since only one of the rings is magical, one PC puts on all four of them to ensure the *water walk* ability. That PC carries another PC on his back, while the other two PCs and the seasick sailors use the boat to cross the river.

Because of the "deadly piranhas" inhabiting the "river," any PC who enters the water outside the boat is pronounced "dead," although no piranhas are actually present. The boat can only hold the weight of four people; if five or more people pile into it, the boat sinks and everyone in it is declared "dead." Similarly, a *water walking* PC can carry only one person on his back without sinking into the water and being devoured by the piranhas. This prevents a particularly strong contestant from grabbing the two prisoners and crossing the river with the *ring of water walking* if the party can't figure out the command word to the *folding boat*.

Allow PCs who ask about the clue engraved on the *folding boat* to make a Decipher Script check (DC 18) to notice the missing letters (don't tell them which letters are missing, though). Finally, anyone who succeeds at a Use Magic Device check (DC 25) can open the *boat* without a command word (consult the "Activate Blindly" option of Use Magic Device on page 76 of the *Player's Handbook*). While this circumvents the truly time-consuming portion of the challenge, clever PCs shouldn't be punished for using the skills in which they're trained.

SCENARIO 7



1 square=1 foot

SCENARIO #7: PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL

A guild wizard named Mercurio is waiting for you at the end of the sixth scenario. "You have made it this far," he says. "Now, you must cross a pool of lava to deliver a valuable spell component to a desperate wizard. The spell component is this small piece of eggshell, taken from the egg of a red dragon immediately after it hatched." Mercurio hands you the eggshell fragment about the size of a human hand.

"Note the layout of the pool of lava," says Mercurio. "There are four small stone platforms rising up out of the pool, each 1 foot in diameter. To assist you in your crossing, here is your starting equipment: Two 10-foot-long wooden boards and two gloves of storage. One glove holds a ring of spell storing loaded with an *endure elements (fire)* spell, and the other holds a homunculus trained to attack everyone but its master. I won't tell you which is which, but note the stitching on the back of each glove. Also, be careful with the boards! They can only support the weight of one of you at a time. And naturally, anyone falling into the lava will be declared dead immediately.

"There is one further thing to keep in mind. The floor at the far end is pressure-sensitive, so as soon as anyone sets foot there, a wall drops to permanently seal off the starting area. I would suggest that you all be out of the starting area when that happens if you wish to succeed at this scenario. If there are no questions, you may begin when you're ready!"

This area is lit by multiple continual flame spells. The lava pool is 6 feet deep, with four stone platforms projecting 1 foot above the lava. For ease of identification, the projections are labeled A, B, C, and D (see the accompanying diagram).

The platforms are separated from each other by 9 feet of space, and both the starting area and the exit area are 9 feet from the nearest platform. The right-handed glove of storage has the letters "IJDM" stitched on the back, while the left-handed glove's embroidery reads "THNB."

SCORING

10 points per PC who crosses to the exit area at the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

PC #1 places one of the boards from the starting area to D, walks to D with the other board, places it from D to C, and walks to C. PC #2 walks to D, removes the board connecting to C and repositions it to reach B, then walks to B. PC #3 walks to D, picks up the board from the starting area and passes it to PC #2. PC #2 places the board from B to A and walks to A. PC #3 walks to B, removes the board connecting to A, repositions it to connect D and the starting area, and returns to B. PC #4 walks to D, removes the board connecting to the starting area and passes it to PC #3. PC #3 reconnects the board from B to A, then passes the board connecting B and D to PC #2. PC #2 uses the board to connect A and the exit area, and walks to the exit. PC #3 walks to A, removes the board connecting to the exit, uses it to connect A to C, then returns to B. PC #1 walks to A, removes the board connecting A to C, uses it to connect A and the exit

SCENARIO 8: PLAYER'S HANDOUT

area, and exits. PC #3 walks to A, removes the board connecting A and the exit area, walks to B, and places the board to connect B and D. PC #3 walks to A. PC #4 walks to B, removes the board connecting B and D, and passes it to PC #3. PC #3 places the board to connect A and the exit area, and PC #3 exits, followed by PC #4.

THE HINT

"The gloves are unnecessary for the task at hand."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Rather than worrying about how long it takes to place a board into position, have the players simulate the time it takes by stating each separate action. For example: "I pick up board 1 and place it between the starting point and stone D" would be 1 round. "I pick up board 2 and walk to stone D" would be another. Picking up a board, setting down a board, and walking across a board are all move-equivalent actions. A PC can take two move-equivalent actions in a round.

DM NOTES

The two *gloves of storing* are red herrings; neither is needed to complete the scenario. (In fact, the letters on the gloves stand for "It Just Doesn't Matter" and "This Has No Bearing.")

The homunculus is stored in the right glove, and the *ring of spell storing* is in the left. The *endure elements (fire)* spell has no real effect on the scenario, for anyone falling into the "lava" submerges below the surface and is declared "dead" by drowning, if not by burning. Naturally, the "pool of lava" is just an illusion; any PC falling through the illusory lava lands on a cushion of soft sand, taking no damage.

PCs with good Jump checks can leap from pillar to pillar. The first jump can be taken as a running long jump, while the others would be standing long jumps. Landing on a pillar after such a jump should require a Balance check (DC 20) to avoid falling in the lava.

Creature: If the PCs release the homunculus, it attacks, biting each PC in turn in an effort to put

them to sleep with its venom. Note that PCs who succumb to the sleep venom might end up snoozing through the rest of the scenario!

Unlike most scenarios, which feature *polymorphed* guild wizards as part of the scenario, this is a real homunculus. It belongs to Mercurio, and he can order it to desist at any time. The homunculus breaks off from combat and flies away if it takes any damage.

➤ **Homunculus:** hp 11; *Monster Manual* 120.

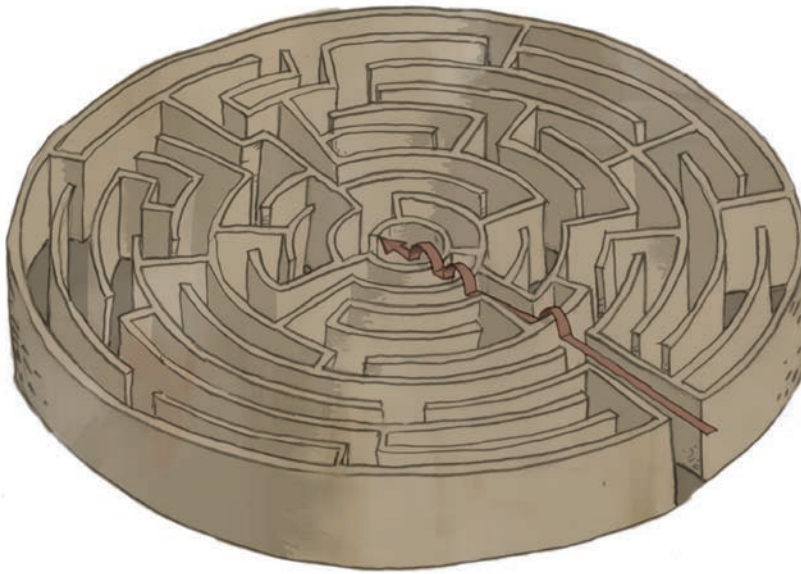
If the PCs attack and kill the homunculus, Mercurio takes 2d10 points of damage (and probably curses to himself at the loss of a week's work), but he's of high enough level that this is merely an inconvenience. Once the PCs move on to the next scenario and before the next competing team starts scenario #7, Mercurio quaffs a curative potion or two and "loads" another homunculus in the *glove of storing*.

SCENARIO #8: ASPHYXIA TE

You are greeted by Parnival, the guild cleric proctoring the next scenario. He offers each of you a drink of water, filling four glass mugs from a rain barrel. "This next scenario challenges your ability



SCENARIO 8: SOLUTION



to navigate a maze," he says. "The good news is that you'll get to see the layout ahead of time." He removes a small cloth from the wall and drops it on the floor to reveal a painted diagram of a circular maze. "The bad news is that you can't take it with you, so you'll have to memorize the route you wish to take ahead of time. To further complicate matters, at the center of the maze is an unstoppered *eversmoking bottle*, which has caused smoke to cover the central area of the maze, as shaded on the map. Here is the stopper. You need only place it back on the bottle, say the command word 'begone,' and exit through the door at the center of the maze. There is no illumination within the maze, so here are two *everburning torches*. You have 15 minutes to complete this scenario. Begin!"

While there is a 20-foot-high ceiling in this area, the walls of the maze are only 10 feet high, allowing the smoke from the *eversmoking bottle* to spill out in the shaded area of the map. Allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the height of the walls in proportion to the ceiling if they don't ask about it (it's something the characters would notice, but not something many players might think to ask about).

Important Note: Once the PCs enter the maze, take the scenario map away from the players.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the door in the center of the maze by the end of the time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs rip the cloth into fourths, creating four handkerchief-sized scraps. They dip their cloths into

the water, wring it out, and study the maze diagram.

After entering the maze, the PCs go straight until they hit the first wall. Then, rather than try to navigate the maze by memory (and using the aphorism "the shortest path between two points is a straight line"), they climb over the walls in their way.

The PCs can toss one of their *everburning torches* over the first wall (to provide illumination on the other side), then boost one another up and over that wall before continuing in a straight line until the next wall. They repeat the procedure, and then again with the wall immediately beyond that one, entering the central chamber. Once there, they locate the *eversmoking bottle* and seal it with the stopper.

THE HINT

"You'll breathe easier through a wet filter."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

When the PCs navigate the maze, you should give the players a description of what their PCs see and a list of their options. Refrain from providing cardinal directions like "north" or "south," referring only to "right," "left," and "straight." This not only puts the onus of figuring out where the PCs are on the players, but the time it takes for you to verbalize their options helps simulate the length of time it takes for the PCs to actually navigate the maze. A short example follows (the example assumes the PCs have tried to memorize their way through the maze instead of climbing over the walls):

DM: "You proceed straight ahead for several paces, then can either turn left or continue going straight."

Player: "We turn left."

DM: "You turn left and follow a corridor that curves slightly to the right. After a time, you can turn left or continue going straight."

Player (forgetting the correct route): "We go straight."

DM: "You continue on, and the corridor turns right, then right again. After continuing on a short distance, it comes to a dead end."

While by no means a perfect system, the central portion of the maze has been divided up into sections (you really can't call them "squares") by red

lines. Assume each red section is the equivalent of a 5-foot square for movement purposes. This makes it easier for you to judge when the PCs must make their smoke inhalation saving throws (see “DM Notes” below).

If the PCs begin climbing the walls, keep track of the number of checks they make to monitor the time. It is recommended that once the PCs finish studying the map and head into the maze, you begin initiative, with all the PCs going at the same time. This will enable you to accurately keep track of elapsed time as the PCs make their way through the scenario.

DM NOTES

Normally, a PC must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) each round she breathes heavy smoke; the DC increases by +1 each additional round. (See the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, page 89, under “Smoke.”) If the PCs are holding wet cloths over their faces, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their saves. A PC who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage. Once a PC has taken more subdual damage than she has hit points, she falls unconscious. Note that a PC can hold her breath (for a number of rounds equal to her Constitution score, and for more rounds after that time has expired if she makes successful Fortitude saves) when entering the smoke to delay having to make saves to prevent smoke inhalation (see “The Drowning Rule” on page 85 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*). But once a character fails a Fortitude save, instead of beginning to drown, she must start making saving throws to prevent smoke inhalation.

Climbing over a wall requires a Climb skill check (DC 15). Note that two PCs can use the Aid Another action to help a climber. If one character has already climbed to the top of the wall (which is 1 foot wide—point this out when the first PC reaches the top of the wall) and is leaning down to help someone below, as many as three PCs can use the Aid Another action. Note that a PC hanging over the edge of a 10-foot wall and dropping to the ground takes no damage. The same is true for anyone who makes a successful Jump or Tumble check (DC 15) to reduce the damage, but anyone foolish enough to leap from the top of a 10-foot-high wall takes the standard 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Note that nimble PCs can attempt Jump and Balance checks to leap from wall top to wall top. This doesn't prevent smoke inhalation, but it can provide PCs with darkvision a good “lay of the land” outside the smoke-filled portion of the maze. Calculate Jump checks based on distance (see the Jump skill description in the *Player's Handbook*), and require leaping PCs to make a Balance check

(DC 20) to avoid falling off the wall after making a landing. PCs who fall take the normal 1d6 points of subdual damage. Jumping into the smoke is possible, though difficult, for PCs who think they've memorized the layout of the maze. If a PC attempts such a feat, impose a –10 circumstance penalty to the Jump and Balance checks to represent the difficulty in gauging distance correctly when effectively blind.

Once inside the central area, a PC can find the *eversmoking bottle* with a successful Search check (DC 12). Once the bottle is stoppered, the smoke dissipates within 10 rounds. The door out of the maze is magically locked, but it opens to the command word “begone” (said when the *eversmoking bottle* is stoppered). On the other side of the door is a set of stairs leading up to the next scenario.

Even if two PCs succumb to smoke inhalation, they still earn their 10 points for the scenario if the other two PCs can drag them out of the door after stoppering the *eversmoking bottle*. This encourages teamwork among the group members.

If the PCs wind up lost in the maze or succumb to the smoke, they are rescued by guild clerics and escorted to the door at the center of the maze. Any subdual damage is healed by the clerics so the PCs can immediately proceed to the next scenario.

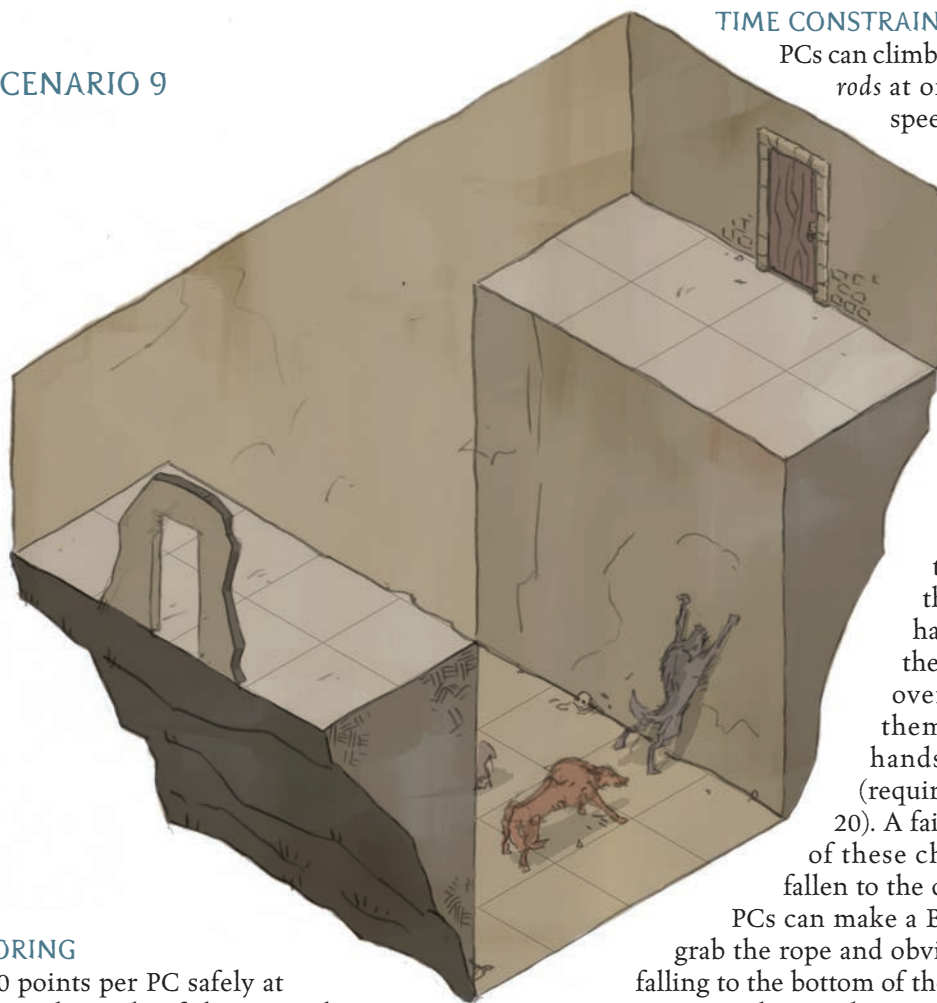
SCENARIO #9: CANINE CROSSING

You are met by Lydric, the guild cleric in charge of the ninth scenario. He leads you to one side of a large pit 20 feet deep, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet long. There are three vicious dire wolves in the bottom of the pit, gnawing on some humanoid bones.

“Your task this time is simple,” says Lydric. “You need only cross the pit without being savaged by the dire wolves. Anyone attacked by them will immediately be declared dead. To aid you in accomplishing your goal, here is some starting equipment: One 12-foot length of rope, one *immovable rod*, and a *ring of spell storing* holding an *invisibility to animals* spell. Please note that there are two other items of possible usefulness: another *immovable rod* and another 12-foot stretch of rope. Unfortunately, you'll find the second *rod* down with the wolves, and the second rope on the far side of the pit. Please note the smoothness of the walls; climbing them is simply not possible. Good luck to you!”

The starting area is only as wide as the pit. The entire area is lit by *continual flame* spells. The ceiling is 10 feet above the floor of the starting area and 30 feet above the floor of the pit.

SCENARIO 9



TIME CONSTRAINT

PCs can climb up a wall using *immovable rods* at one-quarter their normal speed. They cross the rope at half their normal speed.

Again, it is helpful to break into initiative once the actual actions start, keeping track of elapsed time accordingly.

DM NOTES

Crossing the rope can be done several ways. PCs can opt to make a Strength check (DC 10) to pull themselves along the rope (either hand-over-hand while they hang from the rope, or by hooking a leg over the rope and pulling themselves along with their hands), or tightrope across it (requiring a Balance check, DC 20). A failure by 5 or more on any of these checks means the PC has fallen to the dire wolves below. Falling

PCs can make a Balance check (DC 18) to grab the rope and obviate such a disaster. A PC falling to the bottom of the pit has a *feather fall* spell cast upon him and is immediately declared "dead" (savaged by the wolves). Fortunately, the dire wolves are *polymorphed* guild wizards and won't actually harm the fallen contestants. A PC under the effects of the *invisibility to animals* spell is not automatically detected but takes 1d6 points of subdual damage and 1d6 points of regular damage from the fall; guild wizards keep track of this character and save their *feather fall* spells for those PCs not protected.

If more than one PC tries crossing the rope at the same time, a PC holding the end of the rope must succeed at a Strength check (DC 20 if there are two people on the rope, DC 25 if there are three) or have the rope slip from her grasp. Any PCs on the rope fall to the wolves below and are declared dead (again, excluding the PC protected by the *invisibility to animals* spell).

PCs might also attempt to Jump the pit partway, using the first *rod* to halt their fall (a Strength check against DC 5 is required to avoid losing one's grip on the *rod*). They can then attach the first length of rope to the *rod*, and swing back and forth until they reach the other side (provided they jumped far enough). In this case, assume it takes 2 minutes for the last three

SCORING

10 points per PC safely at the other side of the pit at the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

The PC with the *ring of spell storing* casts *invisibility to animals* upon herself or another PC (designated PC #1, regardless). PC #1 takes the *immovable rod* and is lowered into the pit with the rope. She retrieves the second *immovable rod* and uses it and the first *immovable rod* to climb up the wall on the far side of the pit. She then retrieves the other 12-foot length of rope, ties both ropes together, and ties one end of it to the middle of an *immovable rod*. She then throws that end of the rope back to the other PCs, holding on to the other end of the rope as she does so. The PCs in the starting area activate the *immovable rod* at arm's length over the pit, then take turns climbing across the rope while PC #1 anchors the other end with the second *immovable rod*.

THE HINT

"You can climb the wall with the rods."

SCENARIO 10

PCs to swing across one at a time. If the PCs don't tie themselves to the rope, they need to make a Strength check (DC 5) to hold on while swinging.

SCENARIO #10: DEATH POTENTIAL

At last, the final scenario is upon you! "I'm so glad you've made it this far," says Marilyssa, the guild cleric proctoring the last scenario. She looks at your score sheet, then hands it to you.

At this time, give the players the score sheet with their current scores recorded. Once each player has seen the team's scores, Marilyssa begins describing the last scenario:

"You need only cross the narrow bridge spanning the cliff you see before you, puzzle out the magic lock that seals the door in the cliff face opposite us, and exit through it. If you make it, you'll find a set of stairs that leads to the cheering crowd above. If not . . . well, come with me."

Marilyssa leads you to the edge of the cliff. "Believe it or not, we've had complaints about our scenarios not being dangerous enough. I'm sure you've noticed the artificial nature of most of the threats you've faced so far. I suppose there's a case to be made about not putting forth your best effort if you know that no harm will befall you if you fail, but frankly, I'd rather err on the side of caution.

"Nonetheless, it was decided that this last scenario should present some real danger. Therefore, in the waters below swims a hybrid creature: part bloodsucking tick, part tadpole. We call him a tickpole. I'd caution you to keep your footing. Anyone falling into the water will be attacked and probably devoured. I'm prohibited from intervening; if you fall in, you're on your own, although we will attempt to restore the lives of those who signed up for our *raise dead* or *resurrection* offers." She looks down sadly. "There's already been one . . . incident. You don't have to continue with this; just say the word and we'll quit right here."

If the PCs opt not to continue, they earn no points for this scenario. Tally the totals earned for the first nine scenarios and continue with "Concluding the Adventure" below. If they choose to go through Scenario #10, read or paraphrase the following:

"Well then," says Marilyssa, "The mechanics of the lock ahead are simple: There are ten rods, labeled 1



through 10, that must be inserted into the appropriate holes for the door to open. It's up to you to figure out which rods go into which holes, but there isn't much room on the bridge, so you might want to examine the door one at a time. Once the rods are in place, put your hand on the plate on the right of the door. If you've placed the rods correctly, the door will open. If you haven't . . . well, I hope you're good swimmers. If you're ready, you may begin."

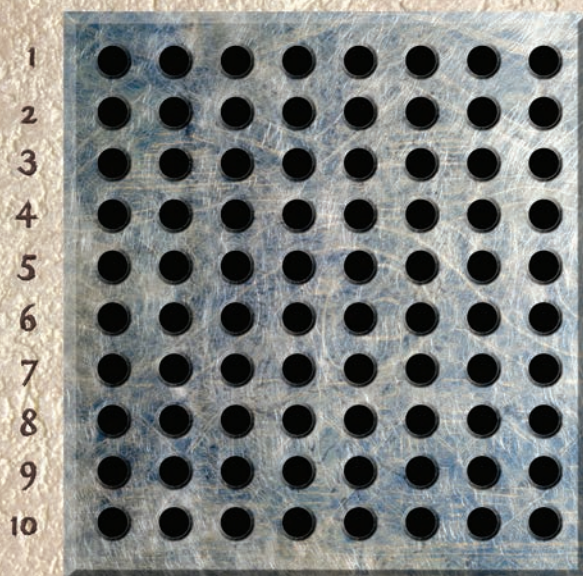
The "bridge" crossing the water is 10 feet long but only 2 feet wide. The water is 10 feet below the level of the door and at least 10 feet deep. The tickpole swims back and forth across the length of the pool like a hungry tiger pacing in a cage. Each metal rod is 4 inches long and half an inch thick.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the door within the time limit.

SCENARIO 10: PLAYER'S HANDOUT

Beware of TICKPOLE



ELF HIVE = L-5
SEASICK SAILORS = C-6
PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL = P-7
ASPHYXIATE = C-8
CANINE CROSSING = K-9
DEATH POTENTIAL = O-10

The numbers correspond with the numbers on the rods, while the letters refer to the letters in the word "TICKPOLE" on the warning sign. The ten rods must be placed as shown in the DM's diagram.

THE HINT

"Your score sheet holds the answer to the puzzle."

DM NOTES

Once a PC places all ten rods into holes, he can attempt to activate the opening mechanism on the door by placing a hand on the plate. If the rods are in the correct sequence, the door swings inward and the PCs can exit. If any rod is in the wrong hole, the bridge instantly vanishes. (Although illusion magic makes it look like a plank of wood, it's really a narrow energy field similar to a wall of force.) Any PCs standing on the bridge at that time fall into the water and are attacked by the tickpole. While the tickpole is in fact a polymorphed guild wizard, rather than just simply having Marilyssa declare the PC dead for the rest of the scenario, hidden guild illusionists

SOLUTION

The solution is derived by looking at the titles of the ten scenarios on the PCs' score sheet. Each scenario title has the solution phonetically imbedded in it, as follows:

CHESS, ANYONE? = E-1

HELL TO PAOY = L-2

ARE THOSE TEETH REAL? = T-3

EOYE FOR AN EOYE = I-4

in the wrong hole, the bridge instantly vanishes. (Although illusion magic makes it look like a plank of wood, it's really a narrow energy field similar to a wall of force.) Any PCs standing on the bridge at that time fall into the water and are attacked by the tickpole. While the tickpole is in fact a polymorphed guild wizard, rather than just simply having Marilyssa declare the PC dead for the rest of the scenario, hidden guild illusionists

TABLE 1: TEAM SCORES BY SCENARIO

TEAM NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Griffons	30	40	30	30	40	40	40	40	40	20	350
Amazons*	40	40	40	20	40	40	40	0	40	40	340
Dangerseekers	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	30	20	330
Four Horsemen*	40	20	40	40	30	0	40	40	40	20	310
Clan of the Claw*	40	20	20	30	40	20	20	40	40	30	300
Shieldbreakers*	40	40	20	40	40	0	40	40	30	0	290
Orcbusters	40	20	40	40	40	0	40	10	40	5	275
The Fearless Four*	30	30	30	30	40	10	30	0	40	20	260
Team Pegasus*	40	20	30	40	40	0	40	0	40	0	250
Alleycats*	40	20	30	40	40	10	20	0	40	0	240
Burly Musclemen*	0	20	30	30	40	0	40	0	40	5	205
Heartbreakers	40	0	20	30	40	0	20	0	10	0	160
Devil Dogs	0	40	30	20	0	0	10	40	0	0	140
Bisquayne's Final Army*	40	0	10	10	30	0	0	30	0	0	120

*These teams were part of the betting pool.

SCORE SHEET

TEAM NAME: _____

	SCENARIO	PC #1	PC #2	PC #3	PC #4	TOTAL
#1	CHESS, ANYONE?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#2	HELL TO PAY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#3	ARE THOSE TEETH REAL?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#4	EYE FOR AN EYE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#5	ELF HIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#6	SEASICK SAILORS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#7	PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#8	ASPHYXIAE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#9	CANINE CROSSING	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#10	DEATH POTENTIAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	TOTAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

create a convincing display of the fallen PCs being ripped to pieces by the guard-beast. (Meanwhile, the real PCs are escorted out of the pool via a hidden underwater exit point.) Marilyssa, for her part, looks anguished at the PCs' apparent demise. One round after blinking out of existence, the bridge reforms and is ready for the next attempt.

Make sure you point out that there is no ledge for the PCs to stand on, so whoever is working on the lock is also standing on the bridge. The door is set right into a tall cliff face 80 feet high.

Because of the nature of the phonetics involved, the following are also accepted locations for the rods: **E-3** instead of **T-3**; **E-6** instead of **C-6**; **E-7** instead of **P-7**; and **E-8** instead of **C-8**.

Allow PCs a make a Decipher Script check (DC 20) to realize that the names of the events sound funny—almost as if there are more words within the titles. If one of the PCs says the name of an event aloud in any context, allow the other characters a Listen check (DC 20) to receive the same clue.

CONCLUSION

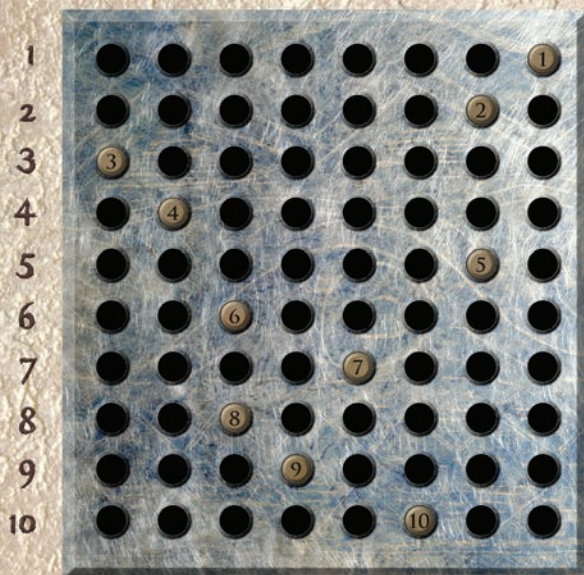
Once the PCs have finished all ten scenarios, their scores are tallied. To compare their results with those of the other teams, consult Table 1.

The characters are escorted to a tent similar to the one where they first gathered. There, they can meet the members of the other teams, who press the PCs for information on how they did. Common questions include, "Did anyone get 'killed' during the scenarios, and if so, how many times?" (The current record is held by Bisquayne, who died no less than four times during the scenarios—twice killed by his own disgusted party members.) The questions continue as everyone tries to gauge their success against that of the PCs. As more teams finish every 15 minutes, the questions and conversation begin again.

A guild representative reminds the PCs that they are free to roam the area until all the contestants have finished the contest. Vendors of all types sell their wares from their carts, and there are guild exhibits set up in tents all along the way. They are warned not to discuss the specifics of the scenarios with anyone other than the competitors who have likewise finished.

SCENARIO 10: SOLUTION

Beware of TICKPOLE



At long last, all the teams make it through the scenarios, and everyone is ushered outside to a waiting audience, eager to hear the results of the contest. The contestants are arranged in a semicircle around a wooden platform. Up to the platform steps Farthingale, the rotund guildmaster of the Adventurers Guild. He says a few opening remarks praising the prowess of this year's competitors, and then begins the awards ceremony. The third place team is called up first, followed by the second place team. The members of the second and third place teams each receive brass medals that note their place in the contest over an engraving of the Adventurers Guild crest. The team's name and the date is also etched into each medallion. Each medal is worth about 1 gp.

Finally, the overall winning team is announced. As Farthingale calls the team up to the stand, applause rips through the audience as they cheer for the winners. The members of the winning team each receive a brass tickpole trophy engraved with their names, their team name, year, and "Challenge of Champions IV" along with the Adventurers Guild crest. It's worth 50 gp. Each member of the winning team also receive a lifetime membership into the Adventurers Guild.


However, there are other, less tangible benefits to having participated in the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. Since the Adventurers Guild keeps

records of everyone who enters the contest, those who did particularly well might be asked to join future guild expeditions. (This can be an easy way to draw the PCs into further adventures.) In addition, other competitors might end up as close friends, cohorts, or full-fledged party members (or hated rivals, which might be more fun) as a result of their meeting with the PCs during the contest.

The contest officially concludes, and the celebration begins in earnest. Vast amounts of food and drink are consumed, musicians and entertainers are kept busy until the wee hours of the night, and the Thieves' Guild is kept hard at work overseeing the payment of the numerous bets that were placed on the various competitors. Amid all of the carousing, Farthingale is overheard to com-

ment to one of his associates, "Whew! These contests are getting harder and harder to come up with!"

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

The "Challenge of Champions" series is a bit different from most adventures in that the scenarios are artificial; the PCs are in no real danger, no matter what the guild illusionists would have them believe. In addition, there is very little treasure compared to standard D&D adventures. An attempt has been made to make the scenarios equally challenging to PCs of any level, as successfully completing a scenario's goal depends more upon player creativity than PC combat abilities or spell repertoire. Thus, rather than assess Encounter Levels (ELs) to each scenario and base the PCs' earned XPs on them, it's suggested that you simply multiply each PC's final score by 10 and award that many XPs. Thus, a PC with a perfect score of 100 gains 1,000 XPs for the experience of having braved the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. 

Johnathan M. Richards is an Air Force Major currently stationed at Fort Meade in Maryland. He is perhaps best known in the RPG community for his Monster Hunters "Ecology" articles in DRAGON Magazine. This is his first appearance in DUNGEON since it converted to 3rd Edition.

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DUNGEON

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT





*An Adventure
for Characters of
Levels 1-3*

illustration by Howard Lyon
cartography by Jered Blando



CROSS CITY RACE

By James "Grim" Desborough

The Best Adventure I Never Wrote

As D&D 3rd Edition rode off into the sunset, Wizards ran a competition for our freelancers, asking them to present the ideas for the adventures that they had always wanted to write but had never done so for one reason or another. Those short synopses were voted on, and the eventual winner from the freelancer submissions was this, "Cross City Race!"

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INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed to be a 'side quest', a break from more typical adventures and dungeon delving.

It begins with the characters arriving within a city where a great fair and revel are in progress. The city is alive with talk about a race that forms part of these celebrations and which engages the town's interest like little else. The race is held every year on the same day.

The goal is to take a letter from the southern gate to the northern watchtower as quickly as possible.

While the race started out as a competition between two message carriers and a celebration of history, it is now open to anyone. There are loose rules about the use of magic and physical violence between competitors but it is, for the most part, a free-for-all with almost anything being considered 'fair'. The race is also open to interference from the citizens. Many bands of children, ruffians, and the bored delight in setting 'traps' for the racers and watching them take a tumble.

The prize for this punishing race is coin and the added inducement of a magical item from the treasury. This year, not only are there material prizes, but the powers that be in the city are looking for a capable runner to take sensitive correspondence between their city and another. The competition proves a method by which they can find the best person for the job, meaning this could be used as an introduction to another plot or adventure for a Dungeon Master needing a good 'hook'.

The adventure can be run with a single player, with multiple players competing against each other and the nonplayer characters, or with one player as the runner and the others providing aid to him and interference to their rivals.

HOW TO RUN THE RACE

The race is made up of a series of skill challenges across a variety of routes, all leading to a final obstacle and the finish line. The number of successes gained demonstrates each racer's position relative to each other on each of the routes. The more successes you get, the faster you're moving; the more failures you get, the slower you're moving and the more trouble you may run into.

Each turn, each racer makes an appropriate skill check. If the check succeeds, then the racer advances along his chosen route. If the check fails, then the racer either remains in place or takes consequences, depending on the challenge. The racer who reaches the end of the route first is the winner and claims the reward, bringing the race to a close.

It's best to run the adventure fairly swiftly to keep a sense of impetus and urgency to it. Things will inevitably slow down in combat encounters, but the added jeopardy should keep the tension up in those instances.

RUNNING THE RACE

Roll Initiative for all the racers as you would for combat. Rounds proceed in this order.

1. The player whose turn it is may try to switch routes, making the roll and taking the consequences. If the switch succeeds, that player proceeds with step 2. Otherwise, that player's turn ends and play jumps to step 3.
2. The player makes a roll for the challenge of the character's current route. With success, the character moves forward to the next appropriate space. With failure, the character

remains in place. If the character has accrued enough failures to trigger a consequence, it must be resolved.

3. Play proceeds with the next player in initiative order, starting at step 1. Continue until the race is won!

COMPLICATIONS

Various things can cause complications during the race, mostly when characters interact with each other or with nonplayer characters. The most common of these potential complications are described here. Use these as guidelines if issues arise with similar powers, magic items, and so on.

CHANGING ROUTES

If a character is having a hard time with a particular challenge or doesn't like the look of what they're going to be up against, they can elect to change routes with a skill roll. The character retains the successes gained on the previous route when entering the new route or if the skill check failed. A switch can be made only between adjacent routes; a character can't go directly from one roof route to another roof route without dropping down to street level first. Changing routes doesn't end the character's turn if the skill roll succeeds; the character can immediately attempt a roll on the new challenge for the area just entered. If the skill roll to change routes fails, then the character takes the consequences listed below and his turn ends.

MOVING FROM ROOF TO STREET

Getting down from the rooftops to the street below is relatively simple but has the potential to do the character a little harm. A character can reach the street in one of two ways:

- ♦ **Jumping down** requires an Acrobatics check against DC 15. If it fails, the character takes 2d10 damage but is not otherwise delayed. The player can make an Acrobatics check to reduce this damage (PHB pg. 181). Succeed or fail, the character is now on the new route.
- ♦ **Climbing down** requires an Athletics check against DC 10. If it fails, the character falls and takes 1d10 damage. The player can make an Acrobatics check to reduce this damage. Succeed or fail, the character is now on the new route.

MOVING FROM STREET TO ROOF

Getting from a street route up onto a roof route takes an Athletics check against DC 10. If it fails, the character falls and takes 1d10 damage. The player can make an Acrobatics check to reduce this damage. The character is not switched to the new route, and his turn ends.

MOVING FROM STREET TO STREET

Moving into the Rich Street Route requires a Diplomacy check against DC 15. With a successful roll, the character makes the switch and continues immediately. If the check fails, the character gets caught up in street traffic or is being lectured on rudeness by a merchant; this turn ends and the character

skips his next turn entirely, but he can continue on the Rich Street Route on the turn after that.

Moving into the Main Street Route requires a Diplomacy or Streetwise check against DC 15. Failure means that the character gets jostled by the crowd and loses 1d4 hit points from being elbowed and smacked around. Succeed or fail, the character is on the Main Street Route.

Moving into the Poor Street Route requires a Streetwise check against DC 15. Failure means that the character gets shoved to the ground by angry people and misses the next turn. Succeed or fail, the character is on the Poor Street Route.

SABOTAGE

A character or an NPC can sabotage the race route behind them in several ways. They could drop caltrops, spill oil on the ground, even set traps and snares on the route. These types of tricks affect only characters who are behind the cheater and on the same route. There are too many possibilities to cover all of them specifically, but in general they should have one of two effects:

- ♦ **Increase the DC of the skill challenge:** This comes about by somehow modifying existing obstacles; pouring oil down a climbing surface, for example, makes an existing challenge considerably more difficult for those following behind. Sabotaging a skill challenge this way should increase its DC by 2 to 5 points, depending on the nature of the interference.
- ♦ **Add an extra skill check:** This sort of effect arises from creating new obstacles or traps in other racers' paths. The new obstacle requires a second skill check before the racer can move on to the next area. Both skill checks

can be rolled on the same turn. Once one of the checks succeeds, that skill doesn't need to be checked again, but both skill checks must succeed before the character can advance. This should be a simple check of the appropriate DC with appropriate consequences. A typical, hasty obstacle (vegetable cart overturned on the road, laundry line pulled down to neck height) adds a second skill check which must be made successfully before advancing. An actual trap of some sort (a snare or net, for example) could force a caught character to lose a turn while getting free. Rigging a trap is considerably more time-consuming than upsetting an apple cart, so it's reasonable to make the lead character spend a turn or more (or make some skill checks) in order to lay the trap.

PUSHING EFFECTS

Many powers can be used to shift opponents around the battlemat during combat. These can be used creatively while addressing skill challenges during the race. If two characters are in the same skill challenge and at the same number of successes, they are considered to be 'neck and neck' in the race and within each other's 'threat range'. In these circumstances a character may forego their skill roll that turn and instead 'attack' the person who is parallel with them, if appropriate. This knocks away one of the target's successes, forcing them backward in the challenge and on the track.

RACIAL ABILITIES

Several races have abilities which could impact skill checks and challenges, as well as some of the complications that have already been covered.

DWARF

The dwarven *Stand Your Ground* racial ability should increase their defense against push attacks described above by +2. Dwarves can still use their saving throw against being knocked prone against any circumstance that would cause this to happen.

ELADRIN

The Eladrin *fey step* racial power can let a character avoid an obstacle or trap completely by moving past it, or get a free success on the right type of skill check. This represents them leaping forward using their ability. It still takes them their turn to do so, however.

SHIFTER

The racial ability *razorclaw shifting* allows shifters to run more swiftly when bloodied (along with its usual benefits) for the duration of the race. On appropriate skill checks or challenge rolls, they should get a +1 bonus to represent their increased speed.

CLASS POWERS

Various classes have powers that could interfere with the race in one way or another. The main ones to be concerned with are addressed here. Using these powers takes up that character's turn.

CLERIC

Cause Fear: If used successfully, this knocks off a success from a competitor anywhere in the same skill challenge as the fear-causing cleric. The attacked character doesn't need to be adjacent to the attacker. Otherwise, this works the same as pushing, described above.

Command: This can be used against anyone in the same skill challenge as the cleric; the target and the cleric don't need to be adjacent. The target of the *command* can be forced to skip a turn, fail a roll, knocked prone (requiring a turn to get back up again) or pushed back (knocking off one of their successes).

FIGHTER

Get Over Here: If an ally of yours is one success behind you in the same skill challenge as you, you can haul them up/forward, bringing them to the same success level as you and effectively giving them a free success on the challenge.

ROGUE

Topple Over: Attacking with a weapon is against the rules but an unarmed attack could still use this to knock someone prone, delaying them for a turn, though it would also delay you.

WARLOCK

Ethereal Stride: For the purposes of the skill challenges, this works the same as the Eladrin *fey step* power.

WARLORD

Knight's Move: You can inspire someone in the same skill challenge as you to make an extra roll this turn at the cost of your own roll.

WIZARD

Icy Terrain: The DC of a skill where slippery ice would be a problem is raised by 2 until the end of your next turn.

Expeditious Retreat: Moving with blinding speed gives you a free success on an appropriate skill check.

BARBARIAN

Combat Sprint: *Combat sprint* can be used to get a free success on an appropriate skill check, representing the barbarian's ability to move quickly over the terrain.

DRUID

Twisting Vines: The DC of a skill check where writhing, tangled terrain would be a problem is raised by +2 until the end of your next turn.

Fleet Pursuit: You can move quickly over the terrain and get a free success on an appropriate skill check.

WARDEN

Mountain Lion Step: If someone has sabotaged the terrain, thereby increasing the DC, you can ignore that extra difficulty for one skill roll.

OPPONENTS

The characters aren't the only ones running the race. Several other opponents face them, drawn from the town and its surroundings, all with their eye on the treasure at the end.

DORION LIGHT-STEP

Dorion is an elven ranger from the nearby woodlands, venturing out in the world and seeking to make a name for himself. This competition is his chance to see whether he's truly capable in character and ability of taking up the life of an adventurer.

Dorion isn't a cheater. He has a strong moral sense that may even lead him to help people who get into serious trouble near him. He'll use his rope and grapple for one climbing obstacle and then leave it behind. He may use his daggers to help him climb when his rope has been left behind, granting him a +1 bonus to Athletics checks for climbing.

Elven Fleet-Foot	Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid, Elven Ranger	XP 100
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3, low-light vision
HP 29; Bloodied 14	
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 7	
⬆ Dagger (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage.	
⬇ / ⚡ Evasive Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Melee or Ranged 10; +6 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage; the elven fleet-foot can shift up to four squares before or after attacking.	
Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)	
The elven fleet-foot can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.	
Wild Step	
The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.	
Alignment Good	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Nature +8, Acrobatics +9	
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 18 (+4) Wis 16 (+3)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 12 (+1) Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment: two daggers, leather armor, rope and grapple	

GARTH COOPER

Garth is a member of the local watch, young and arrogant and looking to win in order to bump himself up the ranks and to impress a girl he likes very much. He's determined to win and to show off, meaning he may take risks. Being a local, Garth knows how to push the rules to their absolute limit and will not hesitate to do so.

He isn't above a little sabotage, either, including spilling a bag of marbles behind him to make life difficult for those following him, not to mention the public.

Garth's bag of marbles, when scattered, requires an Acrobatic skill check against DC 12 to get through. Failure indicates the character falls prone and loses their turn.

Human Watchman	Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, Human Fighter	XP 125
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +2
HP 40; Bloodied 20	
AC 18; Fortitude 18, Reflex 14, Will 14	
Speed 6	
⬆ Short sword (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage. Effect: The watchman marks the target until the end of the watchman's next turn.	
⬇ Tide of Iron (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage and the human watchman pushes the target 1 square and can shift 1 square into the square the target vacated.	
⬇ Brutal Cut (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage.	
Get Over Here (move; encounter)	
The guardsman can slide a willing target 2 squares to a square that's adjacent to you.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Dwarven
Skills Athletics +10, Endurance +10, Intimidate +6	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 13 (+2) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment: short sword, wrist-buckler, leather armor, bag of marbles	

TWO-TEETH

Two-Teeth, named after the teeth he lost after being kicked by a wild horse, is a half-orc barbarian who is traveling through here on his way to somewhere else. Spying an opportunity for profit and being accustomed to long-distance running since childhood, he sees this as a chance for some easy money to pay his way across the land.

Two-Teeth is a stereotypical brute. If he thinks he can get away with it, he'll have no compunction about tackling, beating, knocking out, or otherwise interfering with another runner in order to get ahead. The chalk he has patted onto his hands gives him a +1 bonus to Athletics checks that he makes to climb.

Half-Orc Runner	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, Half-Orc Barbarian	XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +1 low-light
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 13	
Speed 6	
⬆ Brawl (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.	
⬇ Bruising Smash (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Combat Sprint (move; encounter)	
The runner moves its speed + 4, with a +4 bonus to defenses against opportunity attacks this movement provokes.	
Furious Assault (free; encounter)	
Trigger: The runner hits with an attack.	
The runner's attack deals an extra 1d8 damage.	
Half-Orc Resilience	
The first time that the runner is bloodied in combat, they gain 5 temporary hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +10, Endurance +10, Intimidate +6	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 13 (+2)

GAZUNDA

Gazunda is a gnomish rogue, native to the town and determined to win the prize which should be enough to get him “out of this parochial, backwater dump where my inestimable talents are wasted,” in his words. Gazunda has many unscrupulous, cunning, clever, devious plans to unleash on anyone foolish enough to follow the same route he does.

Gazunda has a little box of tricks that he intends to use to pepper the route behind him with nasty surprises—provided his little legs can get him ahead of anyone, of course. These include smoke bombs

Gnomish Trickster		Level 2 Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid, Gnome Rogue		XP 125
Initiative +5		Senses Perception +2 low-light
HP 34; Bloodied 17		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 13		
Speed 5		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage, or 2d4 + 8 with combat advantage, and the trickster slides the target 1 square.		
⚡ Blinding Cut (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage, or 2d4 + 8 with combat advantage, and the target is blinded until the end of the trickster's next turn.		
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome trickster takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion		
The trickster becomes invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.		
Great Leap (move; at-will)		
The trickster jumps 7 squares.		
Reactive Stealth		
If the trickster has any cover or concealment when making an initiative check, the trickster may make a Stealth check.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +6, Stealth +6, Thievery +9, Acrobatics +9		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 14 (+3)	Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment: Leather armor, dagger, box of dirty tricks		

(increase the difficulty of some skill checks by +2) and oil (increases the difficulty of Athletics checks for climbing by +2 or creates a DC 12 slipping hazard for characters entering or leaving a skill challenge area).

TOM BURGHER

Tom is a local bard, beggar, and acrobat from the town who wants to go on to bigger and better things and thinks that he knows the place well enough to stand a chance of winning if he enters the race. He plans to use his natural agility—and his staff—to make his way across town.

The staff gives him a +1 bonus on skill checks where balance is important.

Human Street Entertainer		Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, Human Bard		XP 100
Initiative +3		Senses Perception +0
HP 29; Bloodied 14		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Speed 6		
⚔ Quarterstaff (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
⚡ Blunder (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement		
Ranged 5; +4 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 damage and the entertainer slides the target 2 squares.		
⚡ Vicious Mockery (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +4 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the entertainer's next turn.		
⚡ Surprising Shout (standard; encounter) ♦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +4 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the entertainer's next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +7, Acrobatics +6, Athletics +6		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 12 (+1)	Wis 11 (+0)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 14 (+2)	Cha 18 (+4)
Equipment: Quarterstaff, leather armor		

THE RACE

The race begins at the southern gate and ends at the top of the northern watchtower. The main road connects those two points directly, but it's also crowded. Winding through alleys is longer but less crowded, while scrambling across roofs is perilous but possibly the speediest of all.

The race commences when the drawbridge at the southern gate falls. It ends when the winner passes their letter to the city elder waiting at the top of the tower. The winning runner is then led out of the tower and presented with his prizes before being wined, dined, and feted as the hero of the hour.

THE PRIZE

This year's prize fund consists of a lacquered coffer filled to the brim with 400 gold pieces and a pair of surefoot boots (*Adventurer's Vault* pg. 130) for the winner, as well as free drinks and food for the night of the festival after their win and the admiration of any number of winsome young locals, not to mention the prospect of steady work as couriers on behalf of the city council.

PRELIMINARIES

Before the race starts, the characters can gather information about the history of the race, possible routes, and their opponents.

Registering for the race gives them access to the rules. For everything else, they need to wander around town, scouting out the routes and asking questions about who else is going to be racing.

RACE RULES

- ◆ Participants in the race must be present two hours after first light at the southern gate.
- ◆ Participants must not begin running until the gate portcullis hits the ground.
- ◆ Participants may not directly attack another runner with magic or arms. Roughhousing, wrestling, and bare-hands brawling are permitted.
- ◆ Participants must travel on foot (or their species equivalent). Mounts, magical travel, flying more than a few feet at a time, and any other forms of movement that the judges deem to be cheating will get the racer disqualified.
- ◆ The first one to hand their letter to the town elder at the top of the northern watchtower is the winner and will be awarded the prize. The elder's decision is final in the event of an apparent tie.

ROUTE INFORMATION

Basic information about the different race routes can be gathered by making any of the following rolls at DC 10:

Bluff: The character garners useful information about the race by lying, wheedling, and charming their way around town.

Diplomacy: Amiably talking to residents, who are always willing to talk about the race, and to the race organizers gets access to the same, basic information.

Streetwise: Taking to the streets and asking around, as well as having an eye for the urban landscape itself, can reveal the basic information you need to know about the race routes.

Basic Information: The race typically takes place across one of five routes. One of these is across the roofs of the richer half of the city, passing over the magical quarter, the river, and the wealthy quarter before reaching the tower. The street route for the same area winds through the magic shops, the river docks, and the wealthy gardens. The main road is the most direct route; it passes over the bridge and through the market before the finish line. The poorer half of town has a route winding through its dingy back alleys, crossing the river and passing through Halfling Town before reaching the tower. A racer can also take to the roofs in the poor section, scrambling over the ramshackle buildings, the old city wall, and the roofs of Halfling Town before reaching the end.

Deeper information about each route can be garnered using the same skills at DC 15, rolling no more than once for each. Gathering the information will take the rest of the evening. The duty of looking over the routes should be divvied up between the characters.

Rich Street Route: The magic shops have a lot of frontage and strange things going on; running through there can be a bit hazardous. The working barges tie up at the river next to the bridge. Once you're across, you have to cut through the rich people's gardens without getting chased by guards or dogs.

Rich Rooftop Route: You go over the magic shops and teaching buildings; sometimes their experiments go awry and that can make things more difficult. There's no real river crossing, but the bigger boats tie up at that part of the river. Then you're on the rich people's roofs, and they can get nasty if you damage their expensive roof tiles.

Main Street Route: The main road is straight and wide but tends to be crowded with traffic, especially around the bridge. Once you're past that area, you have to run through the market, which is also crowded with milling people, especially on race day.

Poor Street Route: Certain elements of this neighborhood are dangerous. Since racers are sometimes fairly well off, predatory types may be keen to trip them up and take anything of value they might be carrying or using. The river is filthy here and there are no barges or bridges, so you're stuck swimming across. That gets you into Halfling Town, where if you're human-sized, squeezing through the tight streets can be an issue. If you're halfling-sized, of course, those streets can give you an edge over larger competitors.

Poor Roof Route: The roofs are a bit rickety but they haven't fallen down yet. Birds like to roost in the brickwork and roof spaces, and running across their territory can bring them out. You can cross the river on the old city wall, though it's crumbling in places. Then you're onto the roofs of Halfling Town and they have a lot of chimneys, which means a lot of smoke.

OPPONENTS INFORMATION

Basic information about the different racers can be gathered by making any of the following rolls at DC 10. 'Basic information' amounts to name, race, gender, and some idea of how the character earns a living.

Bluff: Pretending to be an interested fan rather than another racer might get people to open up who otherwise wouldn't.

Diplomacy: Asking the right questions to the right people in the right way, all while being calm and approachable, can be an effective method for getting information.

Insight: Simply observing people while they talk about the race and the racers gives a perceptive person plenty of information to work on.

Intimidate: You can bully information about the other racers out of people, though it might not always be reliable.

Streetwise: Talking to the right people and hanging out in the right places should reveal some interesting gossip that might give you a tactical advantage.

Deeper information about the other racers can be garnered using the same skills at DC 15, rolling once for each. Gathering the information will take the rest of the evening and could be divvied up between the characters. This can be done at the same time as they are looking for more info on the routes.

Dorion Light-Step: Dorion is an elf, a woodsman from the nearby forests, young by their reckoning, and a good person. He knows how to climb and run but he's probably not ruthless and nasty enough to win the race.

Garth Cooper: Garth's a local watchman. He knows the city like the back of his hand. While he's sworn to uphold the law, he tends to get a bit carried away showing off for the ladies and he really, really wants to win. He won't be above a little trickery.

Two Teeth: Two-Teeth is some half-breed barbarian. Nobody quite knows where he comes from, but he literally ran into town on those tree-trunk legs and has shown himself to be a powerful brute. Despite his heritage, he doesn't seem to be a bad sort of fellow. He certainly doesn't talk much. Two-Teeth is expected to largely ignore other racers unless they cross him, and then they should watch out.

Gazunda: That dastardly gnome is a thief, a liar and a cheat. Don't take your eyes off him or turn your back on him. If he shakes your hand, check to make sure you still have your glove. He won't hesitate to stick a knife in your back or set fire to the roof you're running on if it will let him get ahead.

Tom Burgher: Tom's a street entertainer who rolled into town quite a few months ago. He's a mediocre singer but a decent acrobat, and a dab hand with that staff of his. Tom probably won't cause any trouble, but he's unpredictable, so don't be sure.

THE START

The crowds cheer as the contestants line up just inside the southern gate, sizing each other up. With a great deal of gravitas, the captain of the watch passes before each contestant, bows, and presents them with a small scroll bound up with red ribbon—the message to be delivered at the end of the race. With this accomplished, he paces to the side of the starting line and raises a bright red handkerchief and waves it furiously like a flag to signal the guards. In a moment there is a loud 'CLANG!' right behind the runners as the portcullis drops. The race has begun!

And the racers are off and running. Initiative should be rolled now and used to determine turn order throughout the entire race. Each of the NPC runners takes off along their chosen routes, leaving the players to choose their own paths.

SO YOU'RE OUT OF THE RACE?

You're lagging behind all the other racers and there seems to be no way you can catch up. Don't give up! There are still a few things you can do, especially if you have a friend who's still in the race.

For someone who's hopelessly behind, there are quicker ways of getting around. This isn't easy or automatic; a player needs to come up with a good idea for how they'll not only catch up but get ahead, such as flying or grabbing a horse. For obvious reasons, it needs to be something that would normally get the racer disqualified (otherwise, he could just do this to catch up and get back in the race!). By the time a character gets into position for any of the following options, there's no chance to simply jump back into the race; he's been seen 'cheating' by too many observers. All of these strategies are also available to characters who didn't join the race but planned to act as 'racer support' all along.

- ◆ **Cut ahead and yell encouragement:** Once out ahead, a character can keep pace and yell encouragement to his fellows or jeers at their opponents, which grants either a +1 bonus for encouragement or a -1 penalty for discouragement.
- ◆ **Sabotage the other racers:** Once you get ahead, you can lay a few little surprises for the racers: traps, tripwires, oil slicks, and so on. This is unsporting, but it's not against the rules of the race. The actual effects of such hazards must be judged by the DM based on the type of hazard, where it's created, and how much time the character has to construct and camouflage it.

- ◆ **Foul Play:** While a little nondeadly sabotage and a few beatings are all par for the course in this race, more direct or forceful attempts to interfere with the racers are frowned upon. That doesn't mean that an enterprising and unscrupulous adventurer couldn't shoot one of the runners with a crossbow if they really wanted to. At the very least it should make the racer duck and slow down a bit. You don't want to get caught doing this, however.
- ◆ **Spread Rumors:** Spectators can easily spread rumors about the conduct and tactics of one of the other racers. An angry crowd on the verge of rioting is about the only thing that could overturn a winner and prevent them from claiming the prize. This would be a skill challenge set by the Dungeon Master in response to events that have happened during the race, which will determine how riled up the crowd already is.
- ◆ **Play the Crowd:** Hundreds of people are packed into all the best viewing spaces along the route, very intent on the race and dressed up to celebrate. That makes a tempting target for a pickpocket and gives plenty of opportunities for thieves to break into houses. Criminal activity of this type gains a +2 bonus while the race is in progress and everyone is distracted (and more likely to be wearing their wealth).

RICH ROOF ROUTE

This path requires climbing up onto the buildings above the magic and noble quarters of the city. These large, grand buildings are better made than most but they're also built further apart, requiring a little more athleticism to get across the open spaces.

Getting up onto the rooftops requires an Athletics skill check against DC 10 or an Acrobatics check against DC 15. Provided this succeeds, it does not count as the roll for this turn and the runner may proceed directly to the first skill challenge. If this check fails, the runner is stalled and his turn ends.

MAGICAL QUARTER:
HOT ROOF

As the race starts, you scramble onto the roofs of the magical quarter, clambering up through ornate weather vanes and baroque experiments as you start to sprint. The street below is billowing with strangely colored smoke and, as you dash along, you realize that the roof tiles beneath your feet are scaldingly hot.

Each failed roll at this skill challenge also causes the runner to take 1 hit point of damage as their feet are scalded.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, Perception

Acrobatics (DC 10): By springing from brick to brick and keeping off the tiles, jumping over the hotter parts and keeping your feet off the ground as much as possible, you can get across the hot roof without too much trouble. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 15): The best thing to do is just to put your head down and charge across the roof fast enough that you don't get burned. The sooner you're across, the less harm you're going to take. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Endurance (DC 15): The heat is going to hurt long before it does you any real damage. You can grin and bear it and worry about getting your burns healed later on. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Perception (DC 20): The hot tiles have a heat haze over them and are a little blackened. With your expert eye, you can spot the hottest parts of the roof and weave around them. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Success: You reach the edge of the shop roof and leap over the space onto the next roof where the tiles are blessedly cool.

Failure: The roof is too hot and you can't bear it. Your feet are in agony. You must get away from the pain as soon as you can by dropping down to the Rich Street Route. You retain your successes so far as progress in that challenge area.



THE RIVER: RIGGING

The roofs of the magical quarter drop away abruptly as you reach the river. The river is wider and deeper here than on the other side of town. A few small sail boats are moored here as well as the river barges. You might be able to spring from one to the next in order to get across the river.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics

Acrobatics (DC 15): With your acrobatic skill, you can spring from mast to mast and beam to beam quickly and accurately to land on the roofs at the other side of the river. This skill can earn a maximum of 3 successes.

Athletics (DC 20): A headlong dash and a desperate jump or two might get you to the other side, with a bit of luck and a strong tailwind. This skill can earn a maximum of 3 successes.

Success: You leap from precarious perch to precarious perch and make it to the other side of the river in good time, taking a deep breath and scrambling up onto the roofs of the richer houses.

Failure: You lose your footing and plummet down into the stinking water of the river. You are swept down to the 'barges' skill challenge in the Wealthy Street Route. You can retain your successes from this challenge and finish crossing using the swimming challenge rules given there.



WEALTHY QUARTER: A MORAL DILEMMA

Clambering over the crenulated and garden-studded roofs of the rich and powerful, you suddenly espy a thief, using the commotion of the race to pilfer, clambering out of an upstairs window almost directly in your path. If you run on you'll have allowed a thief to get away, but if you interfere you might forfeit the race . . .

The thief is an opportunist who is most interested in getting away with his swag. He will fight viciously but only if cornered. If left alone, the thief will not interfere with the runner, being far more interested in absconding with his loot.

The thief's swag should be worth no more than around 50 gold pieces, if the player decides to keep it. If a character stops the thief, they might get half that much as a reward, plus the experience points for dealing with the thief.

Rather than fighting the thief, characters can elect to leave him alone and escape through the other side of the roof (refer to the Thief Encounter map). Each turn of combat or pursuit gives the other racers a chance to move forward with their own skill challenge.

Escaping from the roof allows the character to progress to the next area. Killing or

otherwise besting the thief will lead to a reward at the end of the race as noted above and some additional experience points. Either way, the thief will not be on this roof for anyone following after the lead hero.

If the thief knocks out, kills, or immobilizes a character, he has no reason to stick around (unless you decide to have him sift through the unfortunate character's pockets). He escapes as quickly as possible.

Halfling Second-Storey Man		Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid		XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 34; Bloodied 17		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Speed 6		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, or 1d4 + 6 with combat advantage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
✂ Thrown Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, or 1d4 + 6 with combat advantage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Mobile Melee Attack (standard; at will)		
The second-storey man can shift up to 3 squares and make one melee basic attack at any point during that movement.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common and Elven
Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +9, Thievery +11		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 10 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, six daggers, thieves' tools		

THE TOWER

Coming down from the wealthy area's roofs brings the runner to the tower, which is described on page 23 as the final obstacle.

RICH STREET ROUTE

SMOKING BARRELS

As the race starts, you dart into the side streets, heading into the clean and tree-lined paths of the richer side of town. You pass beneath the spires and gargoyle-festooned crenulations of the college of wizardry, shifting back and forth through the crowd before you're interrupted by a loud 'crump!' noise and a cloud of sparkling, multicolored smoke billows out of the nearby cellars of an alchemy shop. It floods the street with thick, noxious gas which obscures the shop fronts, crates, and the tangled mass of street detritus in a thick, billowing cloud.

The magic smoke that's bubbling and roiling out of the cellars is more than a little noxious. It makes a +5 vs. Fortitude attack against the racer. If the attack is successful, the racer takes 1d6 + 3 damage and a penalty of -2 to Endurance checks for the rest of the race. The effect fades after a 5-minute rest. Characters can avoid the smoke by changing route if they wish, but this will delay them.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Endurance

Acrobatics (DC 15): The smoke is dense and thick, staying close to the ground. Without climbing up onto the roofs, you can still avoid the smoke by taking to the higher ground, climbing on awnings or market stalls, and leaping from wagon to wagon. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Arcana (DC 20): With your special knowledge of magic, you can identify the particular qualities of this smoke and grab some ingredients from the alchemy stall in which to soak a cloth which you can then hold over your mouth to lessen the effects of the smoke. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Athletics (DC 10): Ducking your head down, you forge through the smoke, barging people out of the way and trying just to get through it as quickly as possible with speed and brute force. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Endurance (DC 15): If you can endure the stinging pain and the racking cough that the glowing smoke causes, you can take your time and pick your way carefully through the panicking, coughing crowd. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You force your way free of the smoke and emerge, eyes streaming with tears, gasping for clean air, back onto the street as another loud 'crump!' sounds from the cellars behind you, showering the street with sparks as something else catches fire.

Failure: You get confused in the smoke and end up turned around on yourself, bumping people and emerging from the cloud back where you started. Either try again—including being attacked by the noxious smoke but retaining existing successes toward completion—or move to a different route.



THE RIVER: BARGES

This side route doesn't have a bridge; you need to make your way across the water by some other means. The water is filthy and busy, with barges moving up and down between the rickety wooden docks carrying goods up- and downriver. A ragged cheer goes up from some of the bargers and from onlookers on the shore as they take bets over how you're going to get across the river.

The water is both disgustingly fetid and incredibly busy. Anyone failing a skill check while crossing is

either bumped or run into by a boat or takes a mouthful of disgusting water. In either instance, they lose 1d4 hit points each time.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff/Intimidate, Thievery

Acrobatics (DC 20): Waiting for the perfect moment, you charge forward to spring from deck to deck of the various barges and rowboats and get across the river without touching the water once.

This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 10): Sometimes the simplest approaches are the best; you dive headlong into the stinking water and swim as fast as you can to reach the other side before swallowing too much scummy, lifeless water. This skill can earn a maximum of 3 successes.

Bluff/Intimidate (DC 20): The best way across the water is the same as the best way to get up and down the river. You can either persuade or intimidate someone into giving up their rowboat so you can row across in safety and comfort. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Thievery (DC 15): If you can't persuade someone to give up their rowboat and you can't terrify them into handing it over, you'll just have to steal one. There are plenty tied up on the bank and along the rickety wooden piers. All you need to do is grab one without being stopped. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Success: Characters who succeed in crossing the river emerge on the other side to continue along their route.

Failure: Characters who fail in the crossing are swept downriver to the next route across, where they keep trying to get the rest of the successes they need to cross. Once they get four successes in total they're across the river, at whatever point where they finally succeed.



WEALTHY QUARTER: GUARD DOGS

While sprinting through the rich quarter, you're forced to take a diversion to avoid a blockage in the street. When you vault over a low wall into a great, green garden surrounding a magnificent home, a pack of spike-collared guard dogs comes snarling and barking out of the shadows beneath the trees, making a line straight for you. Streamers of saliva trail behind them as they pound the dirt toward you.

This square-off against the dogs is a tough encounter for a single character. It's important to note that the character doesn't need to defeat the dogs in battle; he only needs to get past them.

The animals are something between wild wolves and domesticated dogs. They're fiercely loyal to their trainers but can be viciously dangerous to intruders, especially since they haven't eaten a thing all day.

Besides fighting their way through the dogs, characters can try to dodge past the dogs and escape over the far wall (Athletics DC 15) or through the locked gate (Thievery DC 15). Each turn of fighting or fleeing gives the other racers a chance to move forward with their own skill challenges.

Escaping from the garden allows the character to progress to the next area. Killing the guard dogs could lead to a confrontation with the owner after the race, but it also clears the garden of the dogs for anyone trailing behind.

If the dogs bring a character down to 0 hit points, they stand over the body waiting for

their owner to come and deal with the trespasser. Other racers or friends can intervene to help someone in this situation, after dealing with the dogs.

5 Fierce Dogs (D)		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural beast		XP 25 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +6, low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will 11		
Speed 8		
⚔ Bite (Standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage, or 6 against a prone target. If the fierce dog has combat advantage against the target, the target also falls prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 14 (+2)	Wis 13 (+1)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 2 (-4)	Cha 10 (+0)

THE TOWER

Coming in from the wealthy area's streets brings the runner to the tower, which is the final obstacle (pg. 23).

MAIN STREET ROUTE

THE MAIN ROAD: CROWDS

As the race begins you charge past - and through - the cheering crowds and up the cobbles of the main road, bruising your feet on the hard, rounded stones, as you sprint toward your first landmark, the bridge. The crowds of cheering spectators are packed thicker and thicker, cheek by jowl with disgruntled tradesmen and townsfolk simply trying to go about their daily business. It's going to be hard to get through this crowd.

Each failed roll in trying to shove through the crowd results in the loss of a single hit point from being buffeted and knocked around by annoyed townsfolk.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

Acrobatics (DC 10): With your agility you can worm through the crowd and get above it, moving from wagon to wagon and beam to beam, even using people's shoulders as a springboard to run over and above the crowd to get to the bridge. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 15): You hunker down and put your shoulder into it, barging through the crowd and shoving people out of the way in order to get past the tangle. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Bluff (DC 15): Shouting something like 'fire!', 'bandits!' or 'runaway bull!' is a good way of motivating the crowd to scramble out of your way. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Diplomacy (DC 20): 'Excuse me. Pardon me. I'm terribly sorry.' These aren't phrases typically associated with adventurers in a hurry but from sheer shock value they might get enough people to budge just far enough for you to get through. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Intimidate (DC 15): If you holler 'MOVE!' loudly enough and spray people with enough saliva while flexing your muscles, there's a good chance they'll scramble away in fright. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You emerge from the other side of the crowd somehow, to find yourself at the bridge.

Failure: Failure to negotiate the crowd results in getting crushed by the heaving mob. The character takes 1d6 + 3 points of damage and is ejected from the crowd. The runner can elect to cross to a different route or try to push through again, retaining their existing successes for the next try.

THE MAIN ROAD: THE BRIDGE

Leaving the crowd behind, you arrive at the one, main bridge that serves the whole town for getting from one side to the other. There's a steady flow of people back and forth across this broad, stone path . . . or there would be if two big carts hadn't tried to cross at the same time and gotten stuck, their respective owners arguing and shaking their fists at each other. This is, apparently, almost a daily occurrence.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Nature

Acrobatics (DC 15): By jumping up onto the side of the bridge, you can walk along the top of the wall and avoid the blockage and the crowds building up on the bridge deck. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Diplomacy (DC 10): If you can smooth things over between the owners of two carts that are tangled together, they'll be able to move them apart enough so you can squeeze between them instead of going around. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Intimidate (DC 15): A harsh word with the country bumpkins who are arguing over who should get out of whose way scares both of them into getting out of the way. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Nature (DC 20): While the cart owners are arguing, you could take charge of the situation and lead one of the horses out of the way yourself. Then everyone could get across the bridge without needing to thread through the tangle of cartwheels and horse flesh. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Success: If you succeed, you manage to negotiate the snarl on the bridge and can carry on into the marketplace that stands near the foot of the north tower.

Failure: You get stuck in the crowd that is milling around the carts and can't move in any direction. You miss a turn, but then you can continue rolling for this skill challenge, accumulating new successes on top of your existing successes.

THE MAIN ROAD: THE MARKET

The marketplace is a tangle of tents, stalls and crowds made up of many different peoples from the surrounding area. It's full of the smells and sounds of any busy town and the ways between the stalls are close-packed with shuffling people carrying their purchases. The only real gaps are behind the stalls, but you can't just go cutting through there, can you?

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Intimidate, Streetwise

Acrobatics (DC 20): The tents and rickety stalls won't support your weight, but you should be able to dash and tumble through them, thereby avoiding the worst of the crowds. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 15): You can set your shoulders and barge through the crowd, though it won't make you any friends and may shove some people into the stalls and knock over a few merchants' wagons. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Bluff (DC 15): "Everything is half price at the butcher's shop!" is a fine thing to shout if you want to make an enemy of a man with a cleaver. It's also a good thing to shout if you want to get a big crowd of townsfolk out of your way in a hurry. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Intimidate (DC15): Many townsfolk mistrust adventurers at the best of times and fear them at the worst. All sorts of stories are told about wandering bands of vicious grave robbers. You can play off that and act up to your fearsome reputation in order to send people leaping over the stalls and out of your way. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Streetwise (DC 10): If there's one thing you know, it's how to move through a crowd. You slip and slide through the press of bodies with no regard for propriety, property, or personal space. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You manage to get through the market and the crowd of onlookers waiting for the end of the race in order to reach the foot of the north tower, the last obstacle between you and the prize.

Failure: Failure in the market results in being shoved prone by a band of annoyed shoppers and shopkeepers, which delays you for a turn. After that, you may try again to get through the market, retaining your existing successes.

THE TOWER

The market runs almost all the way up to the base of the north tower, where a crowd has gathered to await the runners who will then need to climb to the top to claim the prize.

POOR STREET ROUTE

POOR QUARTER: THUGGERY

As you leap off the starting line and dart, immediately, into the dark and winding alleys of the poor quarter you're already aware of eyes on you from the windows and cul-de-sacs. Sure enough, you round a corner to be confronted by a gang of four surly thugs who seem intent on either robbing you, or breaking your legs for the hell of it. You're not sure which.

Level: 2 (XP 124)

Thugs: These guys get a kick out of interfering with the racers. Any money they make from beating up a contestant is secondary to the pleasure of simply ruining someone's day. If a character chooses to fight, use the Thugs Encounter map as the tactical map for this encounter.

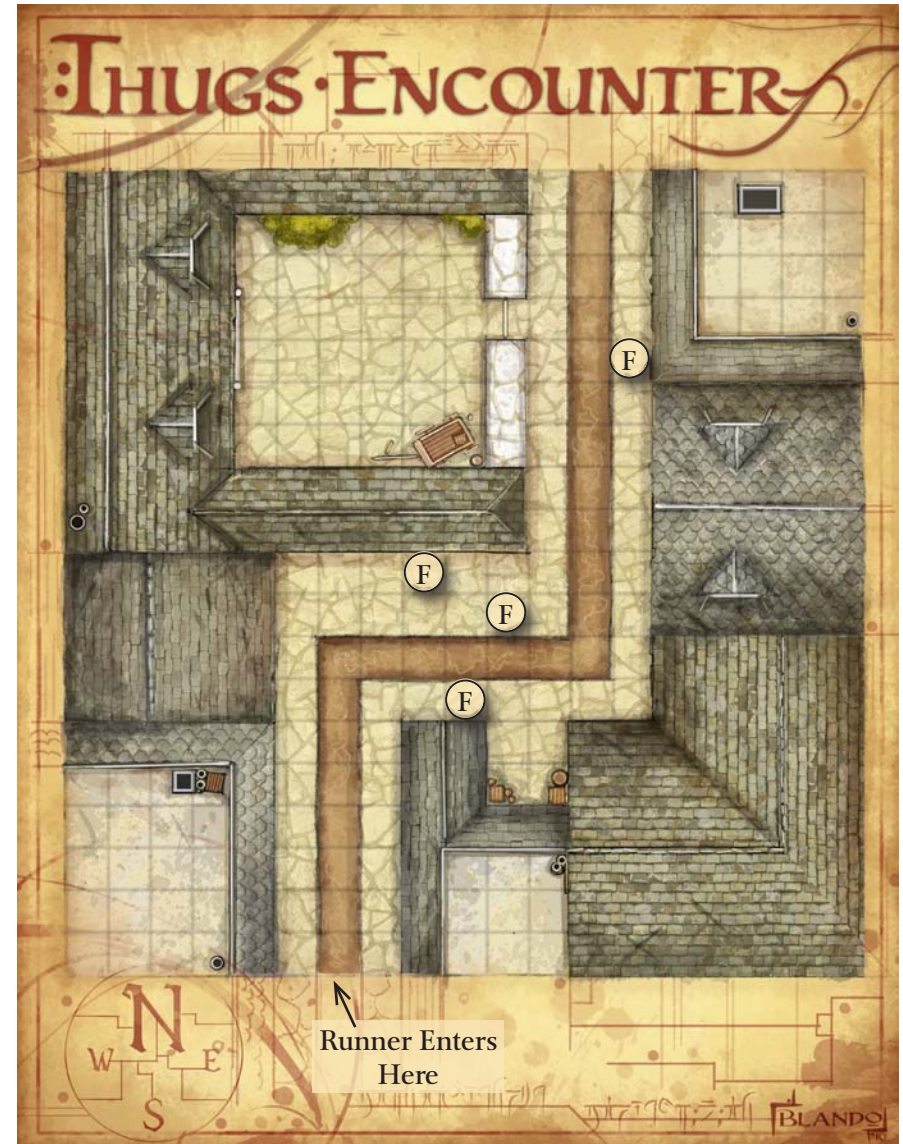
Other Approaches: There may be other ways to get past the thugs. They could be bribed; this requires at least 20 gold pieces and a Streetwise check (DC 15), taking one turn per attempt. They could be bamboozled into letting someone past; this is a complexity 1 skill challenge based on Bluff, Intimidate, Streetwise, and Thievery at DC 15, making one skill check per turn. Failing in either case means that they'd rather fight than talk. Success means they let the character past.

If the encounter goes to combat, the character may be able to evade the thugs and race off the far end of the map. That qualifies as a safe escape, too.

Success: You get past the thugs one way or another and reach the bank of the filthy river that cuts the town in half.

Failure: Failure here comes only when the thugs have beaten a character to the ground. They won't kill someone outright, but they will beat a character into unconsciousness and then take absolutely everything from him, including the clothes off his back.

4 Footpads (F)		Level 2 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 31 each
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
⚔ Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the footpad shifts 1 square.		
Peer Pressure		
The footpad gains a +2 bonus to damage while at least two other footpads are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common and Dwarven
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1)	Wis 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment club		



THE RIVER: DIRTY WATER

There are no bridges, boats, or barges here to cross the river. If you're going to get across, then you really only have one option; to take a plunge into the filthy water and swim across to the other side as fast as you can.

The water is disgustingly fetid. Anyone failing a single check while crossing it takes a mouthful of disgusting water, losing 1d4 hit points each time .

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Nature

Athletics (DC 10): After diving into the water, you hold your breath and concentrate on making powerful strokes with your arms and legs to carry you to the other side. This skill can earn a maximum of 3 successes.

Endurance (DC 15): Even if you're not that good a swimmer, the river doesn't move that fast. It's more about enduring the discomfort until you get to the other side. You can bear it . . . This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Nature (DC 20): If you judge the current right, it will carry you partway to the other side of the river, saving you a lot of effort. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Success: You reach the other side of the river and haul your dripping body out onto the bank, wringing out the worst of the water and trying to work up the energy to run through the Halfling Quarter.

Failure: You get turned around in the murky water, choking and gurgling on the filth as you try to get your bearings. You miss a turn and then may continue the crossing, retaining your existing successes.

HALFLING QUARTER: RAT RUN

The houses and shops suddenly shrink down, the alleys cramping in as you enter the Halfling Quarter, an area of the town that the halflings and other 'little folk' have claimed for themselves. It's terribly cramped and hard to move if you're of a human size and you feel like a blundering elephant. Other 'little people' are going to have an easier time of it here, even if the alleyways are a confusing rat run and maze, the whole quarter having been thrown together hap-hazard.

Any runner who is Medium or larger is going to have trouble making their way through this area; the DCs of their rolls on the skill challenge are increased by 2.

Level: level 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Dungeoneering, Perception, Streetwise

Athletics (DC 20): Provided you run fast enough and don't care too much about who you trample or what you knock over, you should be able to plough through this district like a rampaging giant and get out the other side quickly enough. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Dungeoneering (DC 15): Being hemmed in like this isn't so different from being in a dungeon. Your dungeon instincts might help see you through to the other side. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Perception (DC 15): With a keen eye for the foot traffic and the north tower clearly visible from where you are, you work out which of the many rat-runs actually leads out of the quarter and up to the tower. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Streetwise (DC 10): Knowing the way of the streets is your best ticket through this warren of alleys and narrow avenues. This skill can earn a maximum of 3 successes.

Success: You emerge from the narrow streets, trailing overturned barrows and bruised halflings in your wake, and emerge near the foot of the north tower for the final hurdle.

Failure: You get turned around and lost in the streets. You're caught in the tiny, narrow, twisting alleyways until you barely know which way is which. You lose a turn but can then continue, retaining your existing successes.

THE TOWER

Leaving the Halfling Quarter brings the runner out, close to the northern tower and ready to climb it in order to claim their win.

POOR ROOF ROUTE

POOR QUARTER: PIGEONS

The portcullis slams down and the ringing of iron against stone sets you going. You leap onto barrels and scramble up onto the roofs of the buildings on the poorer side of town. (Ascending to the roof requires an Athletics check against DC 10). As you hit the roof and start running, great clouds of panicked pigeons fly up in droves. Startled by your intrusion, they fill the air with beating wings and fluttering feathers until you can barely see where you're going.

Each failed attempt costs the runner a single hit point of damage from getting pecked and battered and from bumping into chimney stacks in the confusion.

Level: level 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Endurance, Nature, Perception

Endurance (DC 20): You can ward off the blasted birds with your arms and wade through the storm of wings, excrement, and feathers, if you can ignore the mess and the pain. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Nature (DC 15): You know a thing or two about birds. If you just slow down a little and drop into a crouch, you won't spook them half so much. Then you should be able to get through just fine. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Perception (DC 10): Between your memory of what the roofs look like and what you can still make out by squinting, you can pick your way through the confusion. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You emerge from the cloud of pigeons and leap to the next roof, which carries you to the remnants of the old city wall that crosses the river.

Failure: You get turned around, blinded by a particularly persistent pigeon doing its very best to climb

into your mouth. As you pull it away, you misstep and take a 10-foot fall off the edge of the roof. Start again next turn, keeping the successes from this turn.

THE RIVER: THE OLD CITY WALL

The river at this side of town is spanned by the old city wall from when the town was much smaller. Its crumbling arches cross over the filthy water and afford a skillful runner a quick way across the river to the safety of the low roofs of the Halfling Quarter.

Each failure in this challenge causes part of the ancient wall to crumble away, making the path more unpredictable and dangerous. This increases the DCs of all subsequent skill checks by +1, for this runner only.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Dungeoneering

Acrobatics (DC 15): If you can keep your balance, you can sprint across the top of the wall and keep ahead of the crumbling masonry. This will get you across very quickly. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 10): You can't just walk or run across the entire length of the wall; portions are just too precarious and unstable. If you treat it more like climbing, you can pick your way over the stones—slowly—and safely reach the other side. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Dungeoneering (DC 20): Knowledge of walls, brickwork, and ruins is valuable for survival in a dungeon, and the same things apply here. With this knowledge, you can pick out which parts of the wall

will support your weight and which will not. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You leap down from the far side of the wall onto the jumbled roofs of the Halfling Quarter, then dash on toward your final goal with all haste.

Failure: The wall partially collapses under you, spilling you down into the water in a shower of bricks and stones. You lose a turn and then shift to The River: Dirty Water on the Poor Street Route (pg. 21). Retain the successes that you've already accrued, but continue with that swimming skill challenge.

HALFLING QUARTER: CHIMBLIES

The Halfling Quarter is a jumble of low, thrown-together buildings. Because they're so much smaller than 'normal' human houses, the chimneys are much closer together and all of them seem to be spewing smoke and cinders all at once, along with the many and varied smells of cooking food. It's both distracting and confusing, not to mention hot. You need to wind your way through the chimneys and the smoke to find the other side.

Level: 2 (XP 125)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Endurance, Perception

Acrobatics (DC 15): Weaving between the chimney stacks without disaster should be no problem at all for someone with your nimbleness. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Endurance (DC 10): It's just smoke; a little thicker than a campfire or a tavern but still only smoke. You can ignore your streaming eyes and burning lungs long enough to get to the other side. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Perception (DC 20): From the way the smoke rises and churns, you can figure out where the chimney stacks are and avoid them. That should help to get you through the smoke to the other side. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: You burst out of the smoke, coughing and spluttering, eyes streaming, but within dashing distance of the finish line at the north tower.

Failure: With your eyes streaming tears, lungs burning, cinders searing your skin, and blundering against chimney pots, you find yourself utterly disoriented in the smoke. Take a single hit point of damage and a penalty of -2 to Perception for the remainder of the race. By redoubling your efforts, you can continue through the smoke next turn, retaining your existing successes.

THE TOWER

It's not that far down to the street from the roofs of the Halfling Quarter, and then it's a short sprint across the cobbles to the base of the northern tower, where the last challenge of the race awaits.

THE TOWER

To win the race, you need to clamber to the top of the northern watchtower and hand your letter to the town elder. The tower is old and craggy and many of the bricks look loose. Pigeons roost amongst the nooks and crannies and the stone is stained white with their droppings in many places, incongruous clumps of wild grasses and flowers sprouting from unlikely places amongst the brickwork.

Level: 2 (XP 250)

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Dungeoneering, Endurance, History, Nature, Thievery

Acrobatics (DC 15): Swinging from wooden support beams to outward-jutting bricks will get you up the wall quicker than simply climbing. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Athletics (DC 10): It's a straightforward climb and an easy wall at that. There's no need to do anything fancy, just scramble up it. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Dungeoneering (DC 15): Long experience with tunnels and chambers gives you an intimate knowledge of brickwork, with its weak points and the best ways to ascend different surfaces. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Endurance (DC 15): More haste, less speed. Dogged determination counts for at least as much as skill. If you can endure the pain of supporting your own weight, you can take your time climbing the wall. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

History (DC 20): You know the wall was damaged by an orcish attack about a decade ago and the north-facing wall had to be rebuilt. It might be a little harder to climb but it's not going to fall apart on you, either. This skill can earn a maximum of 1 success.

Nature (DC 20): The tower is overgrown with several kinds of creepers and ivy. With your knowledge of plants, you know which ones should hold your weight and, crucially, which ones don't have thorns or contact poisons. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Thievery (DC 15): If this were a bank vault, it would be the easiest heist ever. The mortar is old and crumbly, making it child's play to climb by jamming daggers in the chinks or just scraping away hunks of loose mortar to create your own handholds. This skill can earn a maximum of 2 successes.

Success: The character scrambles over the edge of the parapet and scrambles to the bell, ringing it out

and winning the race—if they're the first person to get here. Then they can clamber wearily down the stairs and claim their magnificent prize!

Failure: One or two failures indicate slippage, losing one's grip but then managing to grasp hold of the tower again without falling. If a character gets three failures before six successes, they fall from the tower. The distance is 10 feet for each success they've accrued, with the normal 1d10 damage for every 10 feet fallen. Characters who survive can start climbing again, but they do so from the bottom; successes are not kept!

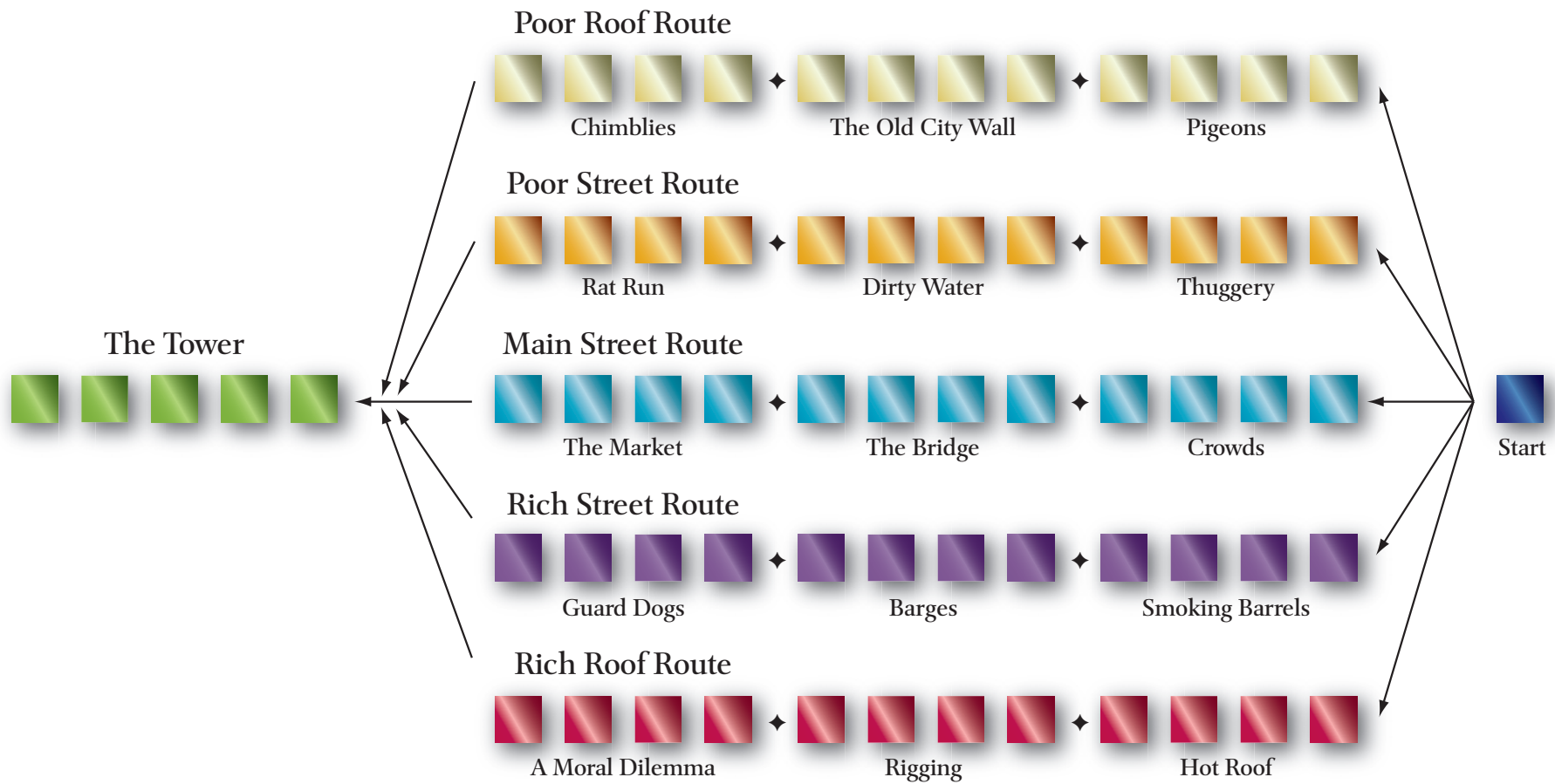
VICTORY!

You press the crumpled and illegible note into the town elder's hand and he raises your arm triumphantly, proclaiming you to be the winner and ringing the alarum bell that hangs in the tower. As it peels, a great cheer goes up from the crowd and the town crier solemnly steps forward to present your prize, a fine pair of boots that twinkle with the glow of magic and a small but weighty coffer of gold. Right now, you're probably too tired to lift it, but it's a fine prize for a morning's work.

The winning racer receives a lacquered coffer filled to the brim with 400 gold pieces, plus a pair of surefoot boots (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 130). They can eat and drink for free during the rest of the day and night's festivities, thanks to all the delighted locals who are happy to buy them drinks and meals. They will be treated as a minor local celebrity, at least until next year's race.

About the Author

Hailing from The Shires of "Merrie Olde England," James "Grim" Desborough escapes from his idyllic, countrified surroundings by indulging his imagination in violence, adventure, and cut-price succubi. Grim freelances across the roleplaying industry and has contributed material to *City of Stormreach* and *Monster Manual V* (both for 3rd Edition).



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DUNGEON

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Owlbear Run

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 4-6

By Christopher Perkins and Steve Townshend

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Cartography by Jason A. Engle

“Owlbear Run” takes place on the trails of a forested mountain between the towns of Telvorn and Milvorn, either or both of which can be renamed to suit the needs of your campaign.

BACKGROUND

Every summer, Duke Hightower holds a competition quite different from the traditional jousting and archery tournaments held by similar lords of his station. The rules of his tournament change from year to year, and, to oversee the games, the duke has appointed two wizard brothers who help choose the setting and create the rules and challenges of the competition.

This year the competition is called the “Owlbear Run,” an overland race that requires each participating team to escort a live owlbear from the town of Telvorn to the town of Milvorn. The teams will face a variety of challenges; some are devised by the wizards, others by the competing teams or their sponsors, and some occur entirely at random. All of these

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tests are in addition to the challenges inherent in motivating a temperamental owlbear.

Fortune and fame await the first team to cross the finish line, and the local lords sponsoring the race are eager to enlist skilled champions for their causes.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

During their travels, the adventurers come to a crossroads with a signpost advertising the competition.

Assuming the characters decide to take the challenge, they proceed to the town of Telvorn, where they submit their names as contestants. The wizards Dirk and Delzar explain the rules of the competition, and then the characters select their owlbear and vie for sponsorship among the local lords.

The race is set on a wooded mountainside crisscrossed by old mining trails. The characters face a number of challenges (including encounters with other teams) on their way from Telvorn to Milvorn, all of which they must face accompanied by their owlbear.

The key to the characters' success lies in choosing the right sponsor or the right owlbear, learning how to motivate the owlbear they choose, and dealing with the other teams whose paths they cross.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

"Owlbear Run" is a nonstandard 4th Edition adventure. In the first part of the adventure, the characters roleplay and make choices that will influence the second part of the adventure, the race itself. Before you begin the adventure, be sure to familiarize yourself with the personalities and goals of the nonplayer character (NPC) team leaders, the NPC sponsors, and the owlbears. Read the sections "Running the Race" and "Dealing with Owlbears" carefully.

The race portion of "Owlbear Run" is made up of random encounters. The adventure will run

differently depending on whom the adventurers choose for their sponsor, which owlbear they choose, which teams they cross paths with, the course the party plots through the woods, and the encounters you roll or selects.

Encounter 1: The Signpost

Roleplaying Encounter

The adventure begins as the adventurers make a mundane trip from one place to another. Along the way, the characters arrive at a crossroads where they learn of the Owlbear Run.

To start, read:

During your journey, you come upon an old cottage near a crossroads. Several people gather outside the cottage as its owner, a wizened old farmer, hammers a sign into the earth at the junction. The sign reads:

GRAND TOURNEY: THE OWLBEAR RUN

**DUKE HIGHTOWER SEEKS SKILLED
CONTESTANTS FOR THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION.
REWARDS OF GOLD, GLORY, AND FAME! INQUIRE
AT THE TELVORN TOWN MARKETPLACE, SOUTH.**

"This is going to be a good one," the old man says. "Last day to sign up!"

The farmer's name is Griss. He farms a small plot of land by the crossroads where he posts and delivers news. The gathered figures are typically 5–6 commoners—Griss's neighbors—interested in the news (but see the "Meeting the Competition" sidebar). Griss knows the following information about the tournament.

- ◆ Every year, Duke Hightower holds a unique and outlandish competition to test the skills of the most resourceful adventurers in the land and to

MEETING THE COMPETITION

Instead of 5–6 random commoners observing Griss's sign, you might decide to introduce one of the competing teams here and let them size up the characters and reveal the details of the competition rather than having Griss do so (see "Competing Teams"). Introducing one of the competing teams right away gives the adventurers a chance to develop early allies or rivals. Because the characters meet several NPCs when they reach Telvorn, introducing one team early lightens the next section and gives at least one other team a spotlight.

The danger of introducing the competition early is that the characters might fight or kill that team, removing it from the race and increasing the characters' odds of winning. Use this option at your discretion. If you choose to introduce a competing team at the crossroads, either choose one or roll randomly to determine which team is present.

bring commerce and wealth to the small towns of the region.

- ◆ Two wizard brothers named Dirk and Delzar design the tournament over the course of the year. Their contests can be devious and in some cases deadly to less skilled participants. Only the best of the best are encouraged to participate.
- ◆ Griss recalls five previous tournaments, including a magical obstacle course made of illusions, a subterranean race through a labyrinth of abandoned mine shafts, a sea battle between five ships and a kraken, a jaunt into the Feywild to attain a gift from the archfey, and a competition where the contestants fought one another while the wizards polymorphed them into various creatures.

- ◆ Three teams have already signed up for the Owlbear Run: Grembul's Stormhammers, Liniel's Fey Band, and Brandok's Brute Squad. If the characters ask, Griss can tell them what he knows about the leaders of each team (detailed in each "Leader" entry in "Competing Teams").
- ◆ The nobles and ambassadors of the duke's court enjoy betting against one another. In the end, the duke awards wealth, honor, and fame to the winning team.

When the characters have finished speaking to Griss or a competing team at the crossroads, proceed to **Encounter 2: Telvorn**.

Major Quest: Win the Owlbear Run

6th-Level Major Quest (250 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they take first place in the Owlbear Run.

Encounter 2: Telvorn

Roleplaying Encounter

The characters arrive in the town of Telvorn to sign up for the Owlbear Run.

As the characters head for Telvorn, read:

You take the road south to Telvorn, a small town nestled at the base of a low, sloping mountain thick with forest. Today the road to Telvorn is crowded with travelers, and the town's outskirts are lined with the tents and striped pavilions of wayfarers from abroad. In the center of town, an inn, a general store, and a church form the perimeter of a bustling market square packed with merchant stalls where money and goods swiftly change hands and the festival attendees wear garlands of flowers in their hair.

The characters can go straight to the market square or choose to explore the town first.

If they choose to explore the town, they might visit the church, the general store and stalls, the inn, the pavilions on the outskirts of town, or the owlbear pens.

When the adventurers are ready to learn the details and rules of the contest or decide to sign up, they can proceed to the market square.

Church: The church is dedicated to Avandra, goddess of change, luck, trade, and travel. The characters can pay the high priestess, Galea, to cast any ritual they can afford. For a donation of 500 gold pieces (or items of equivalent value), the high priestess gives the characters Avandra's blessing: Once during the race, a character can reroll any die result and gain a +5 modifier to the roll.

General Store and Stalls: At the general store, the characters can purchase standard equipment from the *Player's Handbook*®. Certain stalls of traveling merchants might offer special or magic items as you see fit.

Inn: Representatives from each competing team in the Owlbear Run can be found at various times in the Grumpy Gryphon inn and tavern. Here the characters can meet the leaders of each team and form early alliances or rivalries. See the "Competing Teams" section.

Pavilions on the Outskirts: This is where the sponsors can be found. Each sponsor has a stake in an owlbear and holds court under a pavilion in his or her own encampment. See "The Sponsors."

Owlbear Pens: The characters can view the various owlbeats available for the competition in the owlbear pens, a converted horse stable reinforced for the captive owlbeats. The individual owlbeats are detailed in "The Owlbear Pens."

When the characters go to the market square to sign up for the competition, read:

At the center of the market square stands an elevated table beneath a raised pavilion. Two portly, balding middle-aged men lounge in plush chairs behind the table, whimsical smirks on their clean-shaven faces. Upon their black velvet doublets they each wear the silver standard of Duke Hightower. The two appear to be brothers, if not identical twins.

"Last-minute entrants?" says the man on the left.

"All I see is owlbear chow," replies his twin.

The men chuckle together, and after a moment they compose themselves.

"Please state the name of your team," says the first brother as a quill pen materializes between his fingers.

"As well as your specialty," adds the second, plucking a scroll from the empty air and sliding it beneath his brother's pen.

The wizards are Dirkendrick and Delzarian Rumsharkel (known affectionately as "Dirk and Delzar" or less affectionately as the "Ramshackle Twins"), the designers of the contest. They inform the characters about the rules and details of the race. Dirk and Delzar are highly intelligent though somewhat bumbling, and they amuse one another easily. The brothers are essentially indistinguishable and interchangeable unless you want to differentiate them. If the characters ask either of the following questions, roleplay the responses below.

The characters ask what the wizards mean by "specialty." Dirk says, "It's exactly what it sounds like. What's your specialty as a team? What is it that you do?" The characters can come up with any name and specialty they want. Since it's off the cuff, don't be surprised if the players come up with something silly.

The characters ask about the duke. Dirk and Delzar tell them that their esteemed employer is busy organizing the event at the finish line in the town of Milvorn and cannot be consulted prior to the race.



The details of the contest are as follows:

- ◆ Each team must escort a live owlbear from Telvorn over the mountain to the finish line in Milvorn.
- ◆ The teams must run the race using the network of old mining trails on the mountain. No team can teleport, fly over, or circumvent the mountain. Watchers and guards will be posted to ensure that no one cheats.
- ◆ The teams can use any means at their disposal to get ahead on the trails, short of killing another contestant. Murder is grounds for disqualification and a subsequent trial.
- ◆ The entry fee is 5,000 gold pieces per team.
- ◆ The team that wins the contest wins back its entry fee plus half the entry fees of all the other participating teams (an additional 7,500 gp if all three NPC teams participate). The victors also receive bragging rights, fame, and an audience with Duke Hightower. The team that takes second place wins back its entry fee. The team that places third receives half its entry fee. There is no reward for the team that finishes last.
- ◆ Each owlbear is sponsored by a noble or diplomat from Duke Hightower's court. Each team must choose a sponsor/owlbear. The teams can view the owlbear pens or interview nobles in any order. In the past, the sponsors have had the power to overtly impact the contest, so a good sponsor might be a key to victory.
- ◆ To gain a sponsor, a team should impress that individual and prove why the team should represent that sponsor.
- ◆ A sponsor pays the 5,000 gp entry fee for a team he or she supports.
- ◆ If the characters cannot gain or do not desire a sponsor, they can use the owlbear named Rolling Boulder, but they must pay their own entry fee.

- ◆ After each team has selected its owlbear and sponsor, each team receives a map of the mountain trails to plot its intended course.
- ◆ Before the race begins, the teams can purchase any equipment they think they need, or they can visit any of the locations in town, gather information on the other teams, and so forth.

When the characters have made their owlbear and sponsor choices, plotted their route on the map, and made all their preparations, proceed to **Encounter 3: The Race Begins**.

THE SPONSORS

Five nobles are in attendance, each with different motivations and goals. Prior to the race, the characters can interview the nobles at the nobles' pavilions on the outskirts of town and seek their sponsorship for the Owlbear Run. The characters can also ask around town to learn basic information about the sponsors (Streetwise DC 15).

Each sponsor owns a stake in a specific owlbear. A sponsor pays the 5,000 gp entry fee for the team escorting his or her owlbear in the race.

If the characters gain a sponsor, that sponsor gives them each a badge bearing his or her symbol. During the race, the characters will experience one random encounter in which a sponsor tries to influence the race. If this individual turns out to be their own sponsor (25% chance) and the characters display their sponsor's badge, they can bypass the sponsor challenge (see "Encounter Types").

Play the sponsors according to the brief descriptions given here and your imagination. If you require statistics, use an appropriate statistics block of the sponsor's race between levels 5 and 10 from any monster supplement such as the *Monster Manual*[®], *Monster Vault*[™], or the online D&D Compendium.

If the characters need prompting, Sir Tomire sends a page to summon them to his pavilion in hopes they will escort his owlbear, Terrible Tharizdun, in the race.

The characters can interview as many sponsors as they like, but they can gain sponsorship from only one of the nobles.

The noble sponsors participating in the Owlbear Run are described below.

Lady Fazgahrd, Dwarf Diplomat (Good)

Lady Fazgahrd serves her people as a diplomatic envoy to Duke Hightower. She is young for a diplomat, though she is as uncommonly wise as she is extraordinarily beautiful. Her hair is the color of pure gold, and her eyes perfect emerald.

Owlbear: Lady Fazgahrd owns the owlbear called Lucky Lady, an allusion to the dwarves' inborn knack for finding riches and veins of ore.

Sponsorship: Lady Fazgahrd secretly distrusts the humans of Duke Hightower's court with whom she deals on diplomatic terms. She sees through more of their ploys than they are aware. So, she prefers to sponsor a team with a non-evil dwarf who pays respect to her. Otherwise, the characters must impress her with their knowledge of dwarven culture, stonework, and customs. Doing this requires a DC 10 group Dungeoneering or History check in which at least half the characters succeed. Characters who speak Dwarven gain a +1 bonus to their rolls.

If the characters do not gain sponsorship from Lady Fazgahrd, she sponsors Grembul's Stormhammers instead.

Lord Burl, Sheriff (Lawful Good)

Lord Burl is a thin human with slight features and graying golden hair. He is a kind, quiet lord, and he is merciful to the common people, who love him. As the lawful sheriff of Duke Hightower's lands, Lord

Burl wants to sponsor a team that plays fairly and by the rules.

Owlbear: Lord Burl owns the owlbear called Kitten, named by his young daughter.

Sponsorship: If the party has at least two good-aligned characters or one lawful good character, Lord Burl agrees to sponsor them. Otherwise, the characters must assure him of their decency and their strength of moral character. Doing this requires a DC 10 group Diplomacy or Bluff check in which at least half the characters succeed. Evil characters take a -2 penalty to their rolls.

If the party does not gain sponsorship from Lord Burl, he sponsors Liniel's Fey Band instead.

Lord Klavin the Disgraced (Chaotic Evil)

Klavin is a young vassal of Duke Hightower who has recently returned from exile after his father was executed for treason against the duke. Klavin is tall, plain-featured, and unremarkable. He dresses beneath his station and usually passes through a crowd unnoticed (which he prefers).

Owlbear: Lord Klavin owns the owlbear called Manslayer. Klavin named the owlbear himself, though it has thus far shown little interest in slaying humans.

Sponsorship: When his father was killed, Klavin lost most of his ancestral lands and titles and is now barely a minor noble. He desires power more than anything, and he will resort to any means to get it. Though Klavin does not state his intentions directly, he implies that he will sponsor a team that is willing to go to any lengths to win. Klavin will agree to sponsor a party that includes at least two members who are evil, who use the shadow power source, or who are of traditionally evil races such as tieflings, half-orcs, goblins, and vampires. If the characters don't meet these qualifications, they need to convince Klavin that they are willing to fight dirty or break the rules without getting caught. Because Klavin is

naturally distrustful, doing this requires a DC 12 group Bluff or Streetwise check (showing that the characters could be useful agents and spies) in which at least half the characters succeed. Evil characters gain a +2 bonus to their rolls.

If the party does not gain sponsorship from Lord Klavin, he sponsors Brandok's Brute Squad instead.

Sir Tomire, Knight (Unaligned)

Sir Tomire is a veteran warrior with wealth, land, and titles. He is a muscular human, his skin tanned from recent campaigns and scarred from a career of combat. Sir Tomire is practical, direct, and blunt. He speaks his mind without concern for what others (except the duke) think.

Owlbear: Sir Tomire owns the owlbear called Terrible Tharizdun, named for the creature's great size and dark feathers.

Sponsorship: Sir Tomire is accustomed to dealing with mercenaries, so he sends a messenger to the characters in hopes of enlisting them. He will agree to sponsor a party that has at least two martial characters. Otherwise, the heroes must impress him with their strength or boldness by making a DC 10 group Athletics or Intimidate check in which at least half the characters succeed.

DIPLOMACY AND ROLEPLAY

You can allow characters who have training in Diplomacy a DC 10 check to grant a +2 bonus to that character's next non-Diplomacy skill check made to enlist a sponsor. Also consider granting bonuses to characters who roleplay their arguments well.

Minor Quest: Gain a Sponsor

5th-Level Major Quest (100 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they convince one of the nobles to sponsor their team in the Owlbear Run.

THE OWLBears AND TEAMS

The following section describes the way owlbeats are used in this adventure. Think of dealing with the owlbeats as an extended skill challenge that spans the course of the adventure. The primary skills for this challenge are those categorized under "Charm" and "Force" below, and the secondary skills for the challenge are grouped under "Wit." Individual owlbeats respond to these tactics differently, granting bonuses or penalties to the characters' check results. You can learn more about these options in the following text. Throughout the adventure, whenever the characters need to influence their owlbear using force or charm, refer to the "Dealing with Owlbeats" section that begins on the next page.

Minor Quest: Handle Owlbear

5th-Level Minor Quest (40 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward whenever an encounter in this adventure calls for them to influence their owlbear using force or charm. The characters must successfully influence the owlbear, earning 3 successes to handle it, as detailed in the "Dealing with Owlbeats" section. Challenges in which the characters receive this quest reward are labeled with the "Owlbear Challenge" subhead. At your discretion, the characters can earn this quest reward outside an "Owlbear Challenge" encounter whenever their interaction with the owlbear meaningfully impacts the adventure.

Dealing with Owlbears

“Owlbear Run” is an adventure that adds a new member to the party in the form of an owlbear. Think of the owlbear as an NPC with its own basic goals and desires as outlined by the individual owlbear descriptions in “The Owlbear Pens” section on the next page.

By default, the party’s owlbear is surly and irritable; it doesn’t want to be trapped in a harness and dragged across the mountain trails. During encounters, the characters can use various tactics (“force” or “charm”) to influence the owlbear to act in accordance with their will. These tactics are associated with key skills. For instance, a character who pulls on the owlbear’s harness or tries to frighten it is using force; a character who attempts to communicate with the owlbear, lure it, or trick it is using charm. Characters can use “wit” skills as secondary skills to help the group’s chances of influencing the owlbear.

To influence the owlbear with a force or charm tactic, the character making the skill check must be adjacent to the owlbear.

Charm

When the characters try to bait, charm, empathize with, lure, tempt, or otherwise influence their owlbear without applying force or violence, they must succeed on three DC 15 skill checks to influence or motivate the owlbear. The characters can attempt only one check per round, although multiple characters can aid the primary character’s check. After the first skill check, every time the characters try a different charm-related skill during an owlbear challenge, they gain a +2 bonus to the result.

- ◆ **Bluff:** Bait, lure, or trick the owlbear.
- ◆ **Diplomacy:** Calm or influence the owlbear (the owlbear can’t understand speech, but it might respond to body language and tone).

- ◆ **Nature:** Calm, empathize with, or influence the owlbear using basic understanding of beasts.

Failure: Whenever a skill check to charm the owlbear fails by 5 or more, the characters take a cumulative –2 penalty to the use of any charm tactics on the owlbear for the rest of the encounter. If the characters accrue 3 failures before they earn 3 successes, the owlbear refuses to cooperate. The party can no longer attempt to charm the owlbear for the remainder of the encounter and must instead resort to force tactics to influence the beast.*

**The individual encounters include details for how to proceed when both charm and force tactics fail.*

Force

To force an owlbear into obedience, the characters must succeed on three opposed skill checks against the owlbear’s Strength check, using the following primary skills (or other forceful tactics). The characters can attempt only one check per round, although multiple characters can aid the primary character’s check. After the first skill check, every time the characters try a different force tactic during an owlbear challenge, they gain a +2 bonus to the result.

- ◆ **Athletics:** Physically move the owlbear.
- ◆ **Intimidate:** Frighten the owlbear into action.

Failure: If the characters fail three times or if any force tactic fails by 5 or more, the owlbear fights back, attacking the nearest character for 1 round. Thereafter, the characters can no longer use force tactics to influence the owlbear for the rest of the encounter.*

**The individual encounters include details for how to proceed when both charm and force tactics fail.*

Wit

The characters can also use their wits to help influence an owlbear. The secondary skills outlined below give the characters clues as to how to handle the owlbear in the current situation. Each can be used only once during an encounter—the characters either have the knowledge or they don’t—and each success gains a +2 bonus to a single force- or charm-related skill check. Wit skill checks are typically standard actions against a DC of 15. Multiple characters can attempt wit-related checks in the same round.

OWLBEARS IN COMBAT

When the characters are in combat, the owlbear defends itself, making a basic attack against any creature that deals damage to it (including other owlbears) and then moving away. A character adjacent to an owlbear can direct the owlbear to attack a designated target by using a standard action to attempt a force or charm tactic (DC 15 for either). If the character succeeds, the owlbear attacks the designated target until the target drops to 0 hit points; the owlbear does not move on to a new target unless another check is made. If the character fails the check by 5 or more, the owlbear makes 1 round of attacks against that character instead. The owlbear Manslayer is the exception; Manslayer cannot defend himself or be commanded to attack. He can only retreat.

If the party’s owlbear dies, the characters must intercept another team’s owlbear, or the party will lose the race. To intercept another team, the characters must be in the same encounter location on the trail map and fight the team. Ignore all owlbear-related challenges until the party acquires a new owlbear.

- ◆ **Arcana:** Lore of owlbear behavior/physiology.
- ◆ **Insight:** Understand/predict the owlbear's actions.
- ◆ **Perception:** Observe the nuances of the owlbear's current physical/mental state.

Failure: There is no penalty for failure on a check involving a wit tactic.

Alternative Tactics

The characters might think of other skills they can use to influence the owlbear. For instance, a character might try a History check to recall the story of a trained owlbear (wit) or a Heal check to tend an owlbear's wound and gain its favor (charm). Reward creative thinking and allow the players to try any skill or strategy that seems feasible or makes sense within the story.

The Owlbear Pens

Prior to the race, the characters can view the owlbears by visiting the converted stable that holds the owlbear pens.

Each of the noble sponsors owns a stake in a particular owlbear. The characters can choose their sponsor first, or they can choose their owlbear first. Like most NPCs, the owlbears have different temperaments, personalities, and problems, which the characters might attempt to discern before making their choice.

The following table lists the default team/sponsor/owlbear combinations. By choosing a different sponsor/owlbear pairing instead of Sir Tomire, the characters change the defaults. You can either assign the NPC team displaced by the characters to Sir Tomire and his owlbear Terrible Tharizdun, or you can randomly determine each team's new sponsor/owlbear pairing.

Default Team	Sponsor	Owlbear
Grembul's Stormhammers	Lady Fazgahrd	Lucky Lady
Liniel's Fey Band	Lord Burl	Kitten
Brandok's Brute Squad	Lord Klavin	Manslayer
The characters	Sir Tomire	Terrible Tharizdun
Any	None	Rolling Boulder

Each owlbear entry contains a brief description of the owlbear, and a hard skill check allows exceptionally lucky or trained characters to glean a little extra insight into the owlbear—a look ahead at the nature of the challenges they will face with this beast.

When the characters visit the owlbear pens, read the description of the owlbear aloud and let the characters interact with or observe the owlbear. Provide appropriate hints about the owlbear's disposition when the characters ask the right questions and make the right observations.

The owlbears are differentiated by their personalities, quests, and the bonuses or penalties assigned to NPC teams or character tactics. Otherwise, the owlbears' statistics are the same as those in *Monster Vault*. The following sections comprise each owlbear entry.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties: Add or subtract this modifier from the NPC team's Owlbear Challenge modifier (see "Competing Teams").

Character Tactics: This is the bonus or penalty you apply to a character's skill check depending on whether the character is using a force tactic or a charm tactic to influence that particular owlbear.

Minor Quest: This is a quest specific to the owlbear the characters choose. Each owlbear is tied to an Owlbear Encounter later in the adventure, in which the characters can fulfill this quest. The characters should not explicitly know the object of the quest. It's up to the characters to understand their owlbear over

time, and it's up to you to provide hints to the nature of the owlbear throughout the adventure.

Owlbear	Level 8 Elite Brute
Large fey beast	XP 700
HP 212; Bloodied 106	Initiative +6
AC 20, Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 20	Perception +12
Speed 7	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ◆ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage.	
Double Attack ◆ At-Will	
Effect: The owlbear uses <i>claw</i> twice. If both attacks hit the same creature, the owlbear grabs it (escape DC 16) if the owlbear has fewer than two creatures grabbed.	
Beak Snap ◆ At-Will	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the owlbear). The target takes 4d8 + 22 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Stunning Screech ◆ Encounter	
Trigger: The owlbear is first bloodied.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +11 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is stunned (save ends).	
Str 20 (+9)	Dex 14 (+6)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 2 (+0)
	Wis 16 (+7)
	Cha 10 (+4)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —

Lucky Lady

This female owlbear crouches in its pen and glares up at you with unblinking golden eyes, every muscle in her feathered body taut and ready to fight.

Lucky Lady is the fiercest and most aggressive of the owlbears. She was captured in the forested mountains between Telvorn and Milvorn while hunting with her lifelong mate. She has not adapted well to the separation. Lucky Lady leaps up and lunges at any creature that touches the bars of her pen.

Arcana or Insight DC 22: Studies on owlbear behavior suggest that this aggressive creature has

recently suffered the loss of a mate, clan, or brood. Looking into its eyes, you can almost feel its pain.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -2

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: -3

Character Tactics

Force: -2

Charm: +1

Minor Quest: Reunite Lucky Lady with Her Mate

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they successfully reunite Lucky Lady with her mate in the owlbear encounter “Lucky Lady Is Reunited.”

Kitten

This female owlbear lies curled on the straw-covered floor of a pen that can barely contain the beast's great girth. As you approach, she opens her beak and trills softly.

Of all the owlbeats in the race, Kitten is second only to Terrible Tharizdun in size. She has a huge appetite and will eat any food the characters offer her. The reason for this behavior is that Kitten is pregnant; it would take an owlbear expert, however, to know this.

Nature or Perception DC 22: Despite its size, the owlbear does not seem lazy, and despite its soft trilling, it doesn't appear to be hurt. It has woven the straw in its pen into a kind of nest around it.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -1

Fey Band: +2

Brute Squad: -3

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: +2

Minor Quest: Save the Children

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they save the human children and the owlbear eggs in the owlbear encounter “Kitten's Eggs.”

Manslayer

This male owlbear bears the scars of many battles. Deep scratches mark its head in long lines where feathers refuse to grow back. The owlbear backs into the corner of its pen as you arrive, hissing through its terrible beak.

Manslayer is actually a great coward. The scars on his body are the marks of other male owlbeats that competed against him during mating season. Manslayer has always lost such competitions and fled the fight. He has relied almost entirely on fish for his diet because larger creatures (such as the characters) frighten him.

Unlike the other owlbeats, Manslayer does not defend himself in combat and uses his action to flee; he cannot be commanded to attack (see “Owlbeats in Combat”).

Intimidate or Perception DC 22: With every move you make, the owlbear retreats farther into its pen, jumping at sudden movements, growling, and hissing all the more.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: +2

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: +3

Character Tactics

Force: +2

Charm: -2

Minor Quest: Help Manslayer Find Courage

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they teach Manslayer to defend himself in the owlbear encounter “Manslayer Is Cornered.”

Terrible Tharizdun

This male owlbear is so large that two pens have been combined to make up his living area. Covered in black feathers, he sprawls on a thin bed of straw, snoring contentedly. One of his blood-red eyes remains slightly open as he sleeps.

Despite his fearsome size, Tharizdun is extremely lazy. A hibernating owlbear from a faraway mountain region, he devours as much food as possible and then goes to sleep. Tharizdun can sleep through anything short of a physical attack. He is a capable hunter but prefers the fresh kills of other predators.

Arcana or Nature DC 22: Some black-feathered owlbeats come from a mountain stock. These owlbeats eat anything they can find until they grow to enormous size; they then hibernate for an extended time.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: -1

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: -1

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: +1

Minor Quest: Motivate Terrible Tharizdun

5th-Level Minor Quest (200 XP/character)

The characters earn this quest reward if they motivate Terrible Tharizdun to stay awake and finish the race in the owlbear encounter “Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep.”

Rolling Boulder

This owlbear is covered with dun-colored feathers speckled with black dots. It stands upright in its pen, ripping meat from the haunch of an old horse. The owlbear glances in your direction as you approach but otherwise ignores you, focusing on its meal.

Rolling Boulder is largely indifferent to the characters. As long as it is fed, Rolling Boulder remains content, though this does not mean that it cooperates. Rolling Boulder does not have a hostile disposition but rather a contrary one. The owlbear does not understand what the humanoids want from it, but it enjoys eating the food they provide. In its owlbear mind, Rolling Boulder sees the humanoids that have captured it as its servants. Boulder is therefore stubborn, contrary, and difficult to motivate.

NPC Team Bonuses and Penalties

Stormhammers: +0

Fey Band: +1

Brute Squad: +0

Character Tactics

Force: -1

Charm: -1

Minor Quest: DM's Choice

Because Rolling Boulder is an option for characters who don't choose a sponsor or fail to attain one, Rolling Boulder's quest is up to you. Choose one of the owlbear quests detailed in this section and assign it to Rolling Boulder. You will decide whether Rolling Boulder's apathy is due to him (or her) being separated from a mate, pregnant, cowardly, or lazy. You can make Rolling Boulder male or female, depending on the quest you decide to assign to it.

COMPETING TEAMS

Before the race begins, the leaders of each team can be found at the Grumpy Gryphon inn and tavern in Telvorn. Here the characters can get to know the various teams, form temporary alliances or rivalries, or gain insight into the routes the teams plan to take in the Owlbear Run.

If the characters fight and defeat a rival team, award the party the XP for each foe defeated (see the statistics blocks).

Each of the team entries is made up of the following sections.

Leader: The person in charge. Under most circumstances, you should represent each team by the way you characterize and roleplay its leader.

Attitude toward the Party: How the team typically reacts to the characters.

Path Taken: The team's plan for the race. Prior to the race, if the characters engage a team's leader in conversation and make a good impression on that leader (Diplomacy DC 15), he or she might hint at or even reveal the team's intended route. This information can also be gleaned by asking around the market square and the tavern (Streetwise DC 22).

Crossing Paths: What happens when two teams occupy the same encounter location.

Challenge Modifiers: During each advancement round in the race, add the appropriate modifier to the team's advancement roll. The physical, mental, and owlbear modifiers correspond to the three types of challenges an NPC team will face during the race (see "Running the Race").

Grembul's Stormhammers

Leader: Grembul is a spirited dwarf adventurer who never backs down from a challenge (in fact, the marks of many challenges show upon his face). He's missing an ear, an eye, and several teeth, but this fact has not dampened his spirit. He respects bravery and courage and will bear an insult with a laugh if it's delivered with confidence. He has no respect for the cowardly, and he will taunt and mock them. His Stormhammers are composed of dwarves and a few humans.

Attitude toward the Party: Grembul thrives on competition. He treats the party as his esteemed foes. He is confident his team will win, but without another team to beat, his victory would be meaningless. In Grembul's mind, the characters are volunteering to lose to him as a favor simply by participating; he is thus grateful for their presence.

Path Taken: Undaunted by a challenge, Grembul leads his team up and down the mountain slopes toward Milvorn. Grembul's dwarven constitution and familiarity with mountainous terrain makes this path his preferred choice.

Crossing Paths: If Grembul and the party cross paths (and don't fight), Grembul's competitive spirit drives his team even harder; grant the Stormhammers a +2 bonus to their next advancement roll.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +6

Mental: +5

Owlbear: +4

For Grembul's Stormhammers, use the statistics for 5 dwarf hammerers and 3 human rabble.

5 Dwarf Hammerers	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200 each
HP 64; Bloodied 32	Initiative +4
AC 23, Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 17	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Stand the Ground	
The hammerer can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, push, or slide.	
Steady-Footed	
The hammerer can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 3 damage.	
🔪 Throwing Hammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Shield Bash ♦ Recharge ☞ ☜	
Requirement: The hammerer must be wielding a shield.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the hammerer either knocks the target prone or pushes it 1 square.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Stubborn ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy tries to push the hammerer or knock it prone.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The hammerer makes a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 10 (+2) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Dwarven	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer, 3 throwing hammers	

3 Human Rabble	Level 2 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +1	AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 13
Perception +1	Speed 6
TRAITS	
Mob Rule	
The rabble gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while adjacent to two or more allies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Club (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0) Cha 9 (+0)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment club	

Liniei's Fey Band

Leader: Liniei is an eladrin noble visiting the world from Astrazalian in the Feywild. In this tournament, she represents the fey people whose borders lie in the woods and hills near Telvorn and Milvorn. Considering that owlbeasts are fey beasts familiar to her kind, the haughty Liniei believes she will have no trouble winning the challenge.

Attitude toward the Party: Liniei knows her team to be the wisest and swiftest of all those competing. She views the competition as a silly mortal undertaking of little importance, which her team will easily win. She views the other teams with an almost patronizing sympathy.

Path Taken: Liniei's Fey Band travels swiftly through the woods. Liniei chooses the longest path around the mountain, guessing that the other competing teams will all try shorter routes and will then clash with one another. By choosing the more circuitous route, she hopes to run the race unimpeded by other teams. She relies upon her team's natural speed and familiarity with fey beasts (including owlbeasts) to carry them through.

Eladrin Fey Knight	Level 7 Soldier
Medium fey humanoid	XP 300
HP 77; Bloodied 38	Initiative +11
AC 23, Fortitude 19, Reflex 21, Will 17	Perception +4
Speed 5	Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects	
TRAITS	
☼ Feywild Tactics ♦ Aura 5	
Fey allies can score critical hits on rolls of 19-20 while in the aura.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.	
⚔ Stab of the Wild (weapon) ♦ Recharge ☞ ☜	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage, and the target is restrained until the end of the eladrin's next turn.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Fey Step (teleportation) ♦ Encounter	
Effect: The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Feywild Challenge (radiant) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Close burst 5 (one enemy in the burst). The eladrin marks the target until the end of the encounter or until the eladrin uses this power again. While the enemy is marked by the eladrin, it takes 4 radiant damage whenever it ends its turn without attacking the eladrin.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
↩ Harvest's Sorrow ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An attack damages an ally.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 5 (the triggering ally in the burst). The target takes half damage from the triggering attack, and the eladrin takes an equal amount of damage.	
Skills Athletics +12, Nature +9	
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 22 (+9) Wis 13 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 14 (+5) Cha 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Elven	
Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword	

Crossing Paths: Liniei's team is unlikely to cross paths with the characters unless they also choose the long way around the mountain. If they meet (and do not fight), Liniei secretly whispers a charm upon

the characters' owlbear. The next time the characters attempt to influence their owlbear, they take a -2 penalty to the first force- or charm-related check they make.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +3

Mental: +6

Owlbear: +6

For Liniel's Fey Band, use the statistics for 1 eladrin fey knight (Liniel) and 7 eladrin bow mages.

7 Eladrin Bow Mages	Level 7 Minion Artillery
Medium fey humanoid	XP 75 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +7	
AC 21, Fortitude 18, Reflex 21, Will 19	Perception +10
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Force Arrow (force) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 7 force damage, and the eladrin can push the target 1 square.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Fey Step (teleportation) ♦ Encounter	
Effect: The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.	
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 18 (+7) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 14 (+5) Cha 11 (+3)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Common, Elven

Brandok's Brute Squad

Leader: Brandok is a ruthless human mercenary who hires half-orcs, brutes, and thugs for the dirty work that no one else will do. They've been "officially" exiled from three cities. They mean to get the money from the competition and sell themselves to any high-paying sponsor they can. They also intend to incapacitate and rob the other teams along the way. In other words, the competition is an excuse for them to get rich and misbehave. Brandok himself is seven feet tall, towering over even the half-orcs in his band.

3 Raven Roost Outlaw Veterans	Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250 each
HP 86; Bloodied 43	
AC 18, Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 16	Initiative +4
Speed 6	Perception +3
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Bastard Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage.	
↓ Mighty Blow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the veteran can push the target 1 square and then shift 1 square to a square the target vacated.	
↓ Swath of Death ♦ Recharge if either attack misses	
Effect: The veteran uses <i>mighty blow</i> twice.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
↓ Forceful Shove ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The veteran pushes the target 1 square.	
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +9	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 13 (+4) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 7 (+1) Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil	Languages Common
Equipment studded leather, bastard sword	

Path Taken: Brandok leads his team along the shortest possible route around the mountain. He expects others will choose the same path and has prepared his team to fight and disable all competitors.

Attitude toward the Party: Brandok expects to have to fight and defeat the characters. In conversation, Brandok is defiant, confident, and rude.

Crossing Paths: Whenever the characters encounter Brandok's Brute Squad, give them the option to fight or avoid them. Avoiding Brandok's Brute Squad means the characters take a slight detour and grant Brandok's Brute Squad a +2 bonus to its next advancement roll. If they choose to fight, Brandok orders his team to kill the characters' owlbear. If Brandok loses (and lives), the Brute Squad takes a -4 penalty to its next advancement roll. In a fight, Brandok's Brute Squad is the toughest of all

the teams, and a combat encounter with them might necessitate a short rest that costs the characters time.

Challenge Modifiers

Physical: +7

Mental: +3

Owlbear: +5

For Brandok's Brute Squad, use the statistics for 3 Raven Roost outlaw veterans and 3 half-orc hunters.

3 Half-Orc Hunters	Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc	XP 200 each
HP 62; Bloodied 31	
AC 19, Fortitude 18, Reflex 18, Will 16	Initiative +7
Speed 6 (8 when charging)	Perception +8
	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Draw First Blood	
The hunter's melee attacks deal 1d10 extra damage against any target that has not yet taken damage during the encounter.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Battleaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
Ⓢ Longbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
↓ Evasive Chop (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Before and after the attack, the hunter shifts 1 square.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Furious Assault ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The hunter deals damage with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering attack deals 1d10 extra damage.	
Skills Endurance +9, Nature +8	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 17 (+5) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 8 (+1)
Alignment unaligned	Languages Common, Giant
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, longbow, 20 arrows	

Encounter 3: The Race Begins

Owlbear Challenge

Equipped with their route map, sponsor, and owlbear, the characters prepare to race.

When the characters are ready to start the race, read:

On the morning of the race, the owlbeards are harnessed and transported in great wooden wagons from their pens to the fields outside of town. The teams take their places beside the owlbear wagons—which are spaced 100 yards apart—while a massive crowd gathers outside the stockade wall of Telvorn, cheering champions and heckling rivals. In scattered knots, rejected teams that lacked the entry fee or failed to gain sponsorship look on in envy. Atop Telvorn’s wall, the noble sponsors stand beneath their banners and await the sheriff’s signal that will begin the race. Lord Burl looks from team to team to ensure that each one is ready to begin. Satisfied, he motions the attendants to unlock the wagons.

“Let the Owlbear Run begin!” Lord Burl proclaims.

The door to the wagon drops open, and your owlbear glares at you defiantly, strapped into a leather collar and harness, its leash dangling from the cart.

The leash attached to the owlbear’s harness is 10 feet long and extends 2 squares. The characters must force or charm their owlbear to leave the cart and begin the race. As discussed in “Dealing with Owlbeards,” this requires either three successful opposed Athletics or Intimidate checks (using force as a tactic) or three successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Nature checks (using charm). Remember that no more than one success can be attained in a single round. Grant the characters bonuses to their checks if they come up with clever ideas.

Success: The characters motivate their owlbear and begin the race in the lead. Having established

an early rapport with their owlbear, the characters gain a special reward: Once during the adventure, the characters can reroll a die roll associated with handling their owlbear.

Failure: The stubborn owlbear is difficult to motivate and takes a dislike to the characters. During the next owlbear challenge or the next time the characters try to influence their owlbear, the characters take a -1 penalty to all force- or charm-related skill checks made to handle the owlbear.

Completing the Encounter: When the characters have completed this encounter, they advance to the first encounter location on the route they have plotted (see “Encounter Types”). See “Running the Race” below for more on that topic.

RUNNING THE RACE

This section describes how to run the race in Owlbear Run.

1. Plot the Course: Before the race begins, the players consult their trail map handout and draw the path that they intend to follow (the NPC teams follow the routes marked for them on the DM’s version of the map, shown on the next page).

2. Determine Encounters: Each X mark on the map indicates a random encounter location. Unless a team goes out of its way to take a longer route, each will experience six to seven random encounters. For the characters, determine four basic encounters, one sponsor encounter, and one owlbear encounter from the tables in this section. If the characters experience more than six encounters, determine the additional encounters from the Basic Encounter table.

You don’t need to determine encounters for the NPC teams, since these are resolved abstractly (see #4, Advancement Round).

3. Race: When the race begins, each team advances to the first encounter location on its course. The characters deal with the encounter normally, playing through the encounter as written.

4. Advancement Round: When the characters complete their encounter, they advance to the next encounter location along their chosen route (or they choose a new path). The characters advance regardless of whether they succeed or fail. Success gives them a higher chance of outdistancing their adversaries, however, and failure gives the NPC teams a greater chance of surpassing the characters. The results of success and failure are detailed in each encounter.

When the characters advance, you determine the success or failure of the NPC teams’ encounters.

The NPC teams face their own encounters, but since these encounters occur “offstage,” you don’t need to flesh them out. By default, each NPC team faces six encounters along its chosen path. To determine the nature of the challenge an NPC team faces at an encounter location, roll a d8 and consult the following table.

NPC TEAM CHALLENGE

d8	Result
1-3	Physical challenge
4-5	Mental challenge
6-8	Owlbear challenge

Each NPC team has a physical, mental, or owlbear challenge modifier that summarizes its basic proficiency in physical or mental tasks or its relationship with its owlbear (see “Competing Teams”). To see how far an NPC team advances during an advancement round, roll a d20 and add the appropriate bonus that matches the corresponding challenge to the team’s die roll.

For example, when an NPC team rolls to overcome a physical challenge, add the team’s physical bonus to the d20 result, add or subtract any modifiers resulting from the encounter, and consult the following table.



ADVANCEMENT

d20*	Result
1-9	No progress. The NPC team remains at its current encounter location and repeats the challenge with a +5 bonus to its roll during the next advancement round.
10-21	The NPC team advances 1 encounter location.
22+	The NPC team advances 2 encounter locations.

**At the end of any encounter where the characters take a short rest, each NPC team gains a +2 bonus to its advancement roll. If the characters take an extended rest, they automatically lose the race.*

5. Team Clashes: At various points in the race, two or more teams might occupy the same encounter location on the trail map. Assume that NPC teams fight or flee one another but continue their progress. When an NPC team clashes with the characters' team, however, each NPC team entry includes instructions on how it reacts to the characters when they cross paths (see "Competing Teams"). Some teams will attack the characters, while others might try to hinder them or try harder to outdistance them. The characters might also roleplay or share information with a rival team if they established a rapport with it at the beginning of the adventure.

6. Finishing the Race: The first team to advance past its last encounter location to reach the town of Milvorn wins the race. If more than one team advances to Milvorn at the same time, the teams must roll a final owlbear challenge (the characters make the standard three force- or charm-related skill checks). If the characters succeed, they win. Otherwise, the NPC team that rolls the highest owlbear challenge result wins the race. A team without an owlbear cannot win the race. See "Conclusion: The Finish Line."

ENCOUNTER TYPES

There are three types of encounters in Owlbear Run: basic encounters, sponsor encounters, and owlbear encounters.

Choose or roll four basic encounters, one sponsor encounter, and then select the owlbear encounter corresponding to the owlbear the characters selected.

Basic Encounters

Basic encounters usually involve tricks by the wizards Dirk and Delzar, or they present opportunities for the characters to work as a team with their owlbear.

Choose one basic encounter from each map or roll randomly to select a total of four encounters. If the party experiences more than six encounters, choose additional basic encounters to fill in the extra encounters.

BASIC ENCOUNTERS

d8	Result
1	Map A (Trail)—T1: Lost Trail
2	Map A (Trail)—T2: Lord of Death
3	Map B (Cottage)—C1: Owlbear War Wagon
4	Map B (Cottage)—C2: Walking Cottage
5	Map C (Ridge)—R1: New Contestants
6	Map C (Ridge)—R2: Owlbear Stew
7	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—B1: Rough Crossing
8	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—B2: Riddle Bridge

Sponsor Encounters

Sponsor encounters are obstacles involving or created by one of the noble sponsors who has a stake in the race. Choose or roll one sponsor encounter from the following table. A team that rolls its own sponsor has a good chance of easily surpassing a sponsor encounter.

SPONSOR ENCOUNTERS

d4	Result
1	Map A (Trail)—1 ST: Obstacle Course (Sir Tomire)
2	Map B (Cottage)—2 SC: Brigands (Lord Klavin)
3	Map C (Ridge)—SR: Dead End Ridge (Lady Fazgahrd)
4	Map D (Bridge/Stream)—SB: Inspection Point (Lord Burl)

Owlbear Encounters

Owlbear encounters challenge the characters to resolve their owlbear's minor quest. Choose the owlbear encounter that corresponds to the characters' owlbear.

- ♦ Map A—OE1: Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep
- ♦ Map B—OE2: Kitten's Eggs
- ♦ Map C—OE3: Manslayer Is Cornered
- ♦ Map D—OE4: Lucky Lady Is Reunited

ENCOUNTER ORDER

The encounters can occur in any order you want. You can play out the basic encounters first, followed by the sponsor encounter, and finish with the encounter in which the characters try to achieve their owlbear's minor quest. You can also mix the encounters up; the owlbear encounter should occur only after the characters have journeyed some distance with their owlbear. To randomly determine the timing of the owlbear encounter, roll 1d4 + 2. The result places it third, fourth, fifth, or sixth in the order of encounters on your adventure.



Map Features

Owlbear Run uses four maps for encounters, labeled A-D.

- ◆ **Map A** is the trail map.
- ◆ **Map B** is the cottage map.
- ◆ **Map C** is the ridge map.
- ◆ **Map D** is the bridge/stream map.

The standard features of all the maps are as follows.

Bridge (Map D): The wooden bridge is 10 feet wide and spans the steep embankment where the stream flows below. The bridge is of solid construction, but it can be disabled by a team that takes 5 minutes to sabotage it (grant competing NPC teams a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round). Mark the encounter location with the disabled bridge on the route map. NPC teams passing through this encounter location along their route take a -4 penalty to their first advancement attempt.

Cottage (Map B): The beds, chairs, and table in the cottage are difficult terrain. The cottage has two doors and two windows with shutters that can be locked (Thievery DC 20 to open; Strength DC 16 to break; 20 hit points). The cottage is made of wood, and its roof (8 feet high) is tiled with slate shingles. The floor is covered with old dry rushes. A small stone hearth stands in one corner.

Embankment (Map D): The embankment is 5 feet high and requires a DC 10 Athletics check to climb out of the stream.

Logs (Maps A, B, and C): The fallen logs are difficult terrain.

Ridge (Map C): The ridge is steep and 15 feet high. A creature forced off the top of the ridge falls to the bottom and takes 2d10 falling damage; a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check results in half damage. The ridge requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Stream (Map D): The stream is 2 feet deep and flows rapidly. Creatures in the stream move at half

speed. A prone creature in the stream moves with the stream at 3 squares per round.

Trees (Maps A, B, C, and D): These short trees provide cover. Climbing a tree requires a DC 15 Athletics check. A creature climbing a tree can reach a height 10-15 feet above the ground.

BASIC ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters form the bulk of the events that take place during the Owlbear Run.

T1: Lost Trail

Puzzle or Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

Some wizardly work turns the characters around. Use **Map A** (trail map).

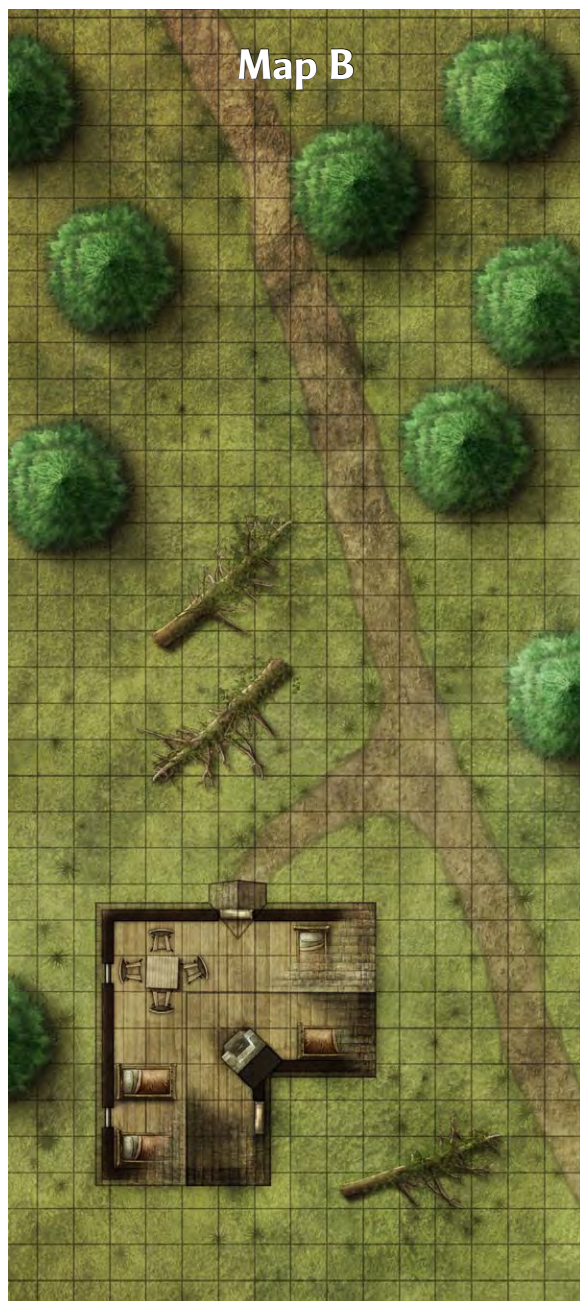
When the characters enter the area, read:

As you travel this stretch of trail, your hungry owlbear meanders toward the sparse berry thickets that grow alongside the trail. As you steer the creature back on course, a wave of dizziness passes over you, and the trail ahead dissolves before your eyes into thick natural forest. Your trail spontaneously materializes a hundred feet away, but now it turns in a different direction than the one you were originally traveling.

The trail has been hidden by a powerful illusion—one of the obstacles designed by the wizards.

Searching for the Trail: If the characters want to spend time searching for the old trail, have each character make a DC 22 Arcana, Nature, Perception, or Search check (each character should use his or her highest skill). If at least three characters succeed, they see through the illusion and discover the old trail.

Following the New Trail: If the characters follow the new illusory trail, it leads them around in circles before putting them back on the right path. The



characters advance to the next encounter location, but each other team gains a +2 bonus to its advancement roll this round.

Using the Owlbear: Any character who thinks to observe the party's owlbear notices the owlbear doesn't appear to see the illusion. It continues to eat the (now invisible) berries from bushes beside the original trail. If the characters try to take the owlbear onto the new trail away from the berries, the owlbear resists and the characters must use force or charm tactics to sway it (see "Dealing with Owlbears"). If the characters allow or encourage the owlbear to seek out the berries, the owlbear leads them past the illusion to the true path without losing any significant time in the race.

T2: Lord of Death

Roleplaying Challenge or Combat Encounter Level 1 (200 XP)

The characters encounter a mad "wizard" with a secret. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The morning fog still lingers on this stretch of the path, obscuring the surrounding woods in a ghostly white gloom. Ahead of you on the trail you can barely distinguish the silhouette of a mighty helmed figure standing in the middle of the path, leaning on an old, rusty axe.

"You are fools to travel this way," a voice rumbles through the fog. "Down this path lie the Gates of Death."

The fog rolls back to reveal the bleached skull and ribs of a deer, half-buried in the embankment to the side of the trail. The voice says, "Lay down your sacrifice to the Lord of Death, lest your foggy trail lead you to his gate."

This figure is no wizard but a madman named Khaz who wanders the hills and abandoned mines between Telvorn and Milvorn, obsessed with places of death. He wears a knight's battered great helm, which covers his

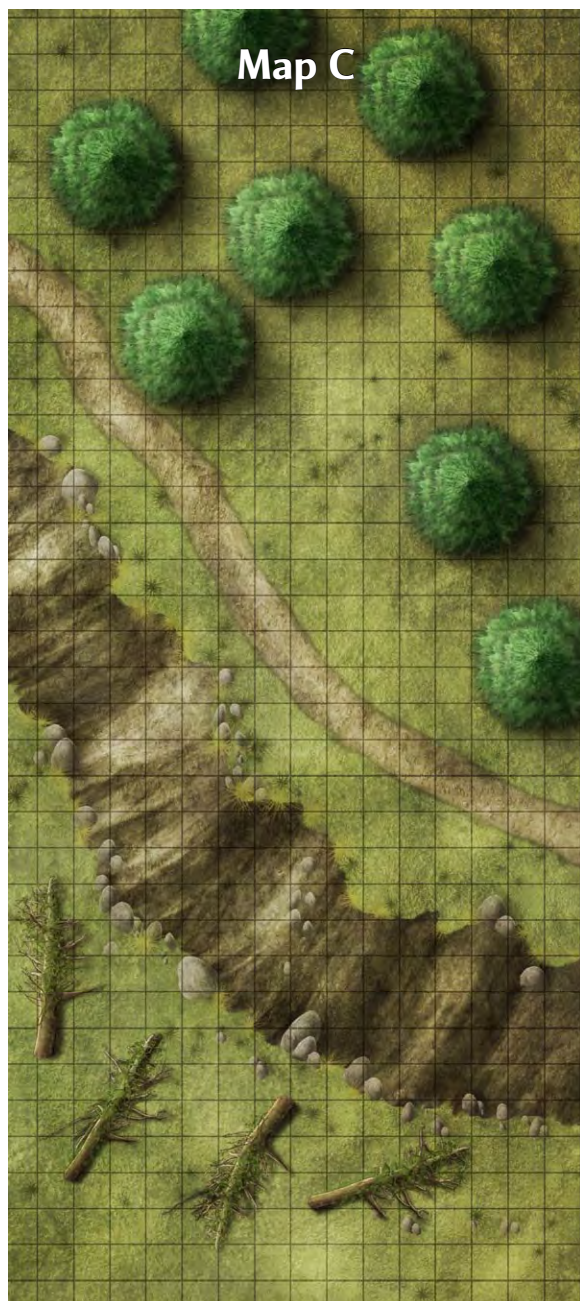
dirty, bearded face, and he wears a black robe with red trim and carries a large, rusted hunting axe. Where he found these items is anyone's guess. Dirk and Delzar, the wizard brothers who created the Owlbear Run, are aware of his presence in the area and they take advantage of Khaz's madness by using him as a challenge in the race. They have protected him with a special *stone-skin* spell that grants Khaz resist 10 to all damage for the duration of the race—in case he runs afoul of one of the teams or their owlbears.

Khaz was a miner in the days before the mines on this mountain dried up. Losing his wife and children to disease quickly drove Khaz mad, inspiring his fevered mind to create the persona of "Khazan the Terrible," a powerful necromancer with a booming voice who believes himself to be the herald of death (use the appropriate Death figure for your setting) and that he can bring his family back by commanding the spirits of the dead. Khaz used to live in the ruined cottage now occupied by the brigands (encounter SC) who forced him out.

If the characters ask what kind of sacrifice he wants, Khaz tells them, *"That which was alive but lives no longer."* He accepts the remains of any creature as well as food or items that clearly originated from a once-living creature. Khaz rejects other offerings, saying, *"The Lord of Death does not know this soul. Speak of what it was that we may sing an elegy to its passing."*

The characters can try to justify any object they give Khaz, from a piece of cloth to a common stone found on the trail. Characters who create interesting or elaborate explanations for their sacrifices should automatically succeed. Characters who can't think of anything can still try, and they succeed with a DC 10 Bluff check.

If each of the characters appeases Khaz, he shows them a shortcut through the "Gates of Death," which is in fact a dark, abandoned mine passage; if the characters take this shortcut, each other team takes a -2 penalty to advancement rolls this round.



If the characters refuse or fail, Khaz attacks them with his axe, shouting nonsense magic words and proclaiming himself the Lord of Death. If the battle continues longer than 3 rounds, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Khaz, Human Berserker	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
HP 66; Bloodied 33	Initiative +3
AC 16, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15	Perception +2
Speed 7	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Greataxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 9 damage.	
✂ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.	
Stoneskin ♦ Encounter	
Effect: Khaz gains resist 10 to all damage until the end of the encounter.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Battle Fury ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: Khaz is first bloodied.	
Effect: Khaz makes a melee basic attack with a +4 power bonus to the attack roll. He deals 1d6 extra damage if the attack hits.	
Skills Athletics +11, Stealth +8	
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 7 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+2)
	Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common	
Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes	

C1: Owlbear War Wagon

Roleplaying Encounter Owlbear Challenge

An old cartwright offers a piece of advice. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

A small cottage lies along the trail. In front of the cottage, several wooden wagons used for carting coal down the mountainside stand in various states of repair. An old man in commoner's clothes and a straw hat leans back in a chair and watches your procession as he smokes his pipe.

"Now I've seen everything," he says, eyeing the owlbear. "Beast of burden or draft animal? I can harness either."

The old man is a cartwright named Jarom. He is unaware of the Owlbear Run, since he seldom receives news from Telvorn or Milvorn. He assumes the characters are here to buy a cart for the owlbear to pull. If they are interested, Jarom shows them his carts for sale. They cost 20 gp each.

Harnessing the owlbear to the cart is another matter, since the characters must force or charm the owlbear to sit still and let them attach its harness to the cart. If the characters successfully force or charm the owlbear into the harness, they must then convince it—with a second force or charm attempt—to pull the cart. Each task requires a separate set of three checks, for a total of six checks to succeed.

Success: The characters harness the owlbear to the cart and convince it to pull them. As long as the owlbear pulls the characters in this way, each other team takes a -1 penalty to advancement rolls for the rest of the race.

Failure: The characters cannot convince the owlbear to cooperate. Jarom gives them their money back, but the characters lose valuable time. Each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.



C2: Charming Cottage

Trap Encounter Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

An enchanted cottage stops by for a bite to eat. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

You are moving along the trail when, from the opposite direction, a cottage approaches. It looks like an ordinary cottage—its timbers are of pine, its roof of slate shingle, its chimney of gray stones. It is altogether commonplace, in fact, except for the twenty or so odd horse legs that carry it down the trail in your direction.

“Hallo!” a friendly voice calls from the front door.

“Might you be interested in a fine meal at a respectful residence? Don’t be shy—come on inside.”

The cottage settles itself on the ground and the door swings open. From inside the door waft the aromas of spices, fresh-baked bread, and roasted meat.

This enchanted cottage is a construct of the wizards Dirk and Delzar, created as a challenge for this contest. The cottage wanders the trails searching for teams (and their owlbears) to capture. When it finds a team, it opens its front door and invites them inside to a full meal, and then it holds them captive until they can escape.

The cottage has all the statistics of the cottage detailed in Map B, except that its front door is a trap created to charm and capture the characters and their owlbear. The horse legs disappear when the cottage sits down at the start of the encounter.

Charming Door Object	Level 5 Trap XP 200
Detect see Countermeasures HP 20	Initiative –
AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex –, Will –	
Immune cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, ongoing damage, forced movement, all conditions	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚡ Attack (charm) ⚡ At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> A creature moves within 5 squares of the cottage door	
<i>Attack:</i> Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> On its turn, the target moves its speed toward the cottage and attempts to enter. When the target enters the cottage, it sits at the table and eats the feast upon the table (save ends).	
COUNTERMEASURES	
⚡ Detect Arcana DC 15 to detect the cottage door as the source of the entrancing hospitality effect.	
⚡ Delay/Disable: Arcana DC 17 (minor action). <i>Success:</i> When the cottage door is closed, the entrancing hospitality effect cannot be cast. Its effects persist.	
⚡ Destroy: Strength DC 16 or 20 hit points/damage to door (standard action). <i>Success:</i> The door breaks, and the entrancing hospitality effect can no longer be cast.	

The primary goal of the cottage is to capture the team’s owlbear. After the owlbear is captured inside the cottage, the doors and shutters close and must be broken or picked normally.

A captured owlbear will not leave the cottage on its own. Instead, it contentedly devours the meal before it, and the characters must use force or charm tactics to get it to leave. For each round the owlbear spends trapped in the cottage, each other team gains a +1 bonus to advancement rolls this round. When the characters destroy the cottage door and regain their owlbear (or abandon it to search of another), the encounter ends and the characters move to the next encounter location.

R1: New Contestants

Combat Encounter Level 1 (440-660 XP)

The characters encounter a new group of contestants. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail leads along the side of a ridge. Fallen timbers lie at the bottom of the decline, overgrown with moss and briars. Suddenly a spear cuts through the air and thumps into the trunk of the tree behind you.

"We want be famous owlbear-runner team!" a voice shouts from below. "We take owlbear now!"

Ten orcs camouflaged by mud and leaves ready their spears, grunting challenges from the brush at the base of the slope.

These orcs tried to enter the Owlbear Run but were unable to find a sponsor. They have taken it upon themselves to steal an owlbear from one of the teams and win the race.

In the first 2 rounds of combat, the orcs throw handaxes at the characters from below, using cover as much as possible. The orcs concentrate on one character at a time in an attempt to pick them off one by one; if an orc reduces a character to 0 hit points, the orc knocks the character out rather than landing a killing blow.

If there is a third round of combat, five new orcs enter the fray on top of the ridge. These orcs attempt to bull-rush the characters off the ridge. Since they know they're not supposed to kill any contestants, the orcs simply try to push the characters down the decline. If at any point the orcs are alone with the owlbear at the top of the ridge, they capture it and hustle it away. The characters will then need to find a new owlbear with which to compete.

If the orcs steal the owlbear, they join the race at a different encounter location, the same distance as the characters from the end of the race. Use the

challenge modifiers for Brandok's Brute Squad for the new orc team.

10 Orc Savages	Level 4 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 44 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +3	Perception +1
AC 16, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 12	Low-light vision
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 8 damage, or 12 with a charge attack.	
☞ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 6 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Savage Demise ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 13 (+3)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 8 (+1)
	Wis 9 (+1)
	Cha 8 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant	
Equipment hide armor, 4 handaxes	

R2: Owlbear Stew

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,100 XP)

Owlbear Challenge (if the owlbear is bloodied)

A bugbear hunting party and a troll decide to try owlbear for dinner. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

A pall settles over the mountain woods the farther you walk down this trail. Soon the bird songs cease and the forest falls silent. Among the trees, several pairs of eyes watch you from a distance on either side of the trail: A bugbear hunting party accompanied by a gigantic troll emerges.

The troll sniffs in the direction of the owlbear and smacks its lips.

"Owlbear stew?" it grunts to its grinning companions.

The troll and the bugbears attack from both sides of the trail. To gauge the owlbear's reaction, refer to "Owlbears in Combat" in the "Dealing with Owlbears" section.

If the owlbear is bloodied in this encounter, it might try to flee. Tell the characters that the owlbear is panicked and will attempt to escape if they cannot calm or restrain it. If the bloodied owlbear starts its turn with no character adjacent to it, it flees. The characters can take standard actions to use force- or charm-related skills to stop the owlbear (DC 15). Every round the characters score a success, the owlbear does not flee. After three successes, the owlbear regains its composure and no further checks are necessary.

If the owlbear flees the map, it escapes into the woods, and the characters must search for it after the

Troll	Level 9 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 400
HP 120; Bloodied 60	Initiative +8
AC 21, Fortitude 22, Reflex 18, Will 18	Perception +6
Speed 8	
TRAITS	
Regeneration	
The troll regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the troll takes fire or acid damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.	
Troll Healing (healing)	
Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid or fire damage reduces the troll to 0 hit points, the troll does not die and instead falls unconscious until the start of its next turn, when it returns to life with 15 hit points. If an attack hits the troll and deals any acid or fire damage while the troll is unconscious, it does not return to life in this way.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Claw ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the troll uses claw against it again.	
Str 22 (+10)	Dex 18 (+8)
Con 20 (+9)	Int 5 (+1)
	Wis 14 (+6)
	Cha 9 (+3)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant	

battle. If this happens, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

4 Bugbear Thugs		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175 each
HP 65; Bloodied 32		Initiative +7
AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 11		Perception +8
Speed 6		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Bushwhack		
The bugbear gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against a creature that has no allies adjacent to it.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ Morningstar (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 6 if the bugbear has combat advantage against the target.		
☞ Handaxe (weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.		
Skills Stealth +12		
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment evil		
Languages Common, Goblin		
Equipment leather armor, morningstar, 2 handaxes		

B1: Rough Crossing

Owlbear Challenge

A bridge over a stream becomes a roadblock when the owlbear refuses to cross. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail crosses a small bridge that spans a steep embankment above a rapidly flowing stream. As you approach the bridge, your owlbear halts and peers over the bank at the flowing water below. Then it settles back on its haunches and plants itself stubbornly on the ground.

The owlbear does not want to cross the stream, but it can be persuaded or browbeaten into crossing the

bridge. The characters can encourage the owlbear using force or charm tactics.

Success: The characters gain the owlbear's respect or trust. The owlbear crosses the bridge, and the characters gain a +1 bonus to all future force or charm tactics with that owlbear, depending on which tactic they used.

Failure: The owlbear refuses to cross the bridge, and the characters must lead it the long way around the stream. All other teams gain a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

B2: Riddle Bridge

Puzzle Challenge (100 XP/character)

An illusory wizard presents the characters with a riddle to help or hinder them. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

Ahead, a small wooden bridge crosses one of the many streams that winds its way down the mountainside. Before the bridge stands a transparent image of the wizard Delzar. When you approach, the illusion speaks.

"Should this riddle confound you, I'll be astounded. Guess it wrong, and your path's confounded.

*"A bother to its mother,
Who would abandon it if she could,
Her waif-like, worthless only child
That grows up plump and fat lying abed,
On the verge of a sea change.
'Such a pretty thing,' the men say one day.
They knife the mother, seize the daughter,
Bind her to the others, continue their slaughter,
Sell them at market in chains and strings
To adorn the courts of queens and kings."*

The illusion is a trick devised by the wizards to test the party's cleverness. A DC 22 Arcana check reveals strong teleportation magic in and around the bridge.

The characters earn the XP reward only if they answer the riddle correctly.

Correct Answer: The correct answer to the riddle is "a pearl." If the characters answer correctly, they cross the bridge and advance to the next encounter location.

Incorrect Answer: If the party answers incorrectly, the illusion of Delzar vanishes. When the characters cross the bridge, they experience a dizzying sensation and find themselves elsewhere. Place the characters at a different encounter location of the same distance to the finish line. The characters reorient themselves and plot their new course, and each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Avoiding the Bridge: If the characters try to go around the bridge, they experience the same dizzying sensation as if they had answered the riddle incorrectly, but they are teleported off the trails. Each other team gains a +4 bonus to advancement rolls this round as the characters trudge through the woods to find the trails again.

Intelligence Check Option: If the players can't guess the riddle and insist that their characters would know, you can allow an Intelligence check against a DC you feel appropriate. If you do this, make sure the players put forth a strong effort before resorting to the die roll.

SPONSOR ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters are created by the sponsors to help their teams gain an advantage.

ST: Obstacle Course

Trap Encounter Level 5 (200 XP)

The trail hides a dangerous obstacle course used by Sir Tomire's troops for training. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

Ahead on the trail, you spot a dozen heavily armed warriors flying the banners of Sir Tomire from their tents. Some sit around a small campfire while others hone weapons or don armor. A sentry hails you as you approach.

"Well met," he says. "Welcome to the company of Sir Tomire."

This trail leads through a part of the mountain that Sir Tomire uses to train his forces. The sentry explains to the characters that the path ahead and the woods around it are full of hazards and traps. Normally the sentry would guide travelers around the area, but since Sir Tomire has a stake in the Owlbear Run, he can give no aid to a competing team.

If the characters proceed through the area, they risk setting off a number of whirling blades traps hidden beneath the ground. There are five traps buried in various places on and around the trail. You should choose the locations of these hidden contraptions and the location of the single control panel that the captain of the guards has access to. If they ask nicely (Diplomacy DC 12), the captain shows the characters the panel but says he cannot disable the traps for them, since doing this would aid Sir Tomire's competitors. He advises the characters to try a different path.

Whirling Blades	Level 5 Trap
Object	XP 200
Detect Perception DC 22	Initiative + 7
HP 55	
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, Will –	
Resist 5 all; Immune cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage.	
Speed 4	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
◀ Attack ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	

Assuming they don't turn around, the characters can attempt to disarm the traps by using the control panel or pass through the area and risk setting off the traps.

If the characters choose to risk the traps, have them roll initiative. On each character's turn, ask the player to move the character across the map. When a character (or owlbear) crosses a square with a hidden contraption, the whirling blades activate. If the owlbear is damaged by a whirling blades trap, it attacks that contraption until the contraption is destroyed. If another trap damages the owlbear, it abandons the first trap and attacks the second until it is destroyed.

The obstacle course extends throughout this part of the mountain, and the characters cannot avoid it if they proceed along their chosen route. If they try to go around the traps, select a different map and choose five squares for the hidden contraptions and a place for the control panel on that map.

If the characters try to deactivate the control panel and fail, they must proceed through the traps anyway (or turn around); in either case, if the characters fail to overcome the obstacle, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If the characters fight Sir Tomire's men, use the statistics for 12 town guards (*Monster Vault*, page 171).

If Sir Tomire has sponsored the characters and they show his badge to the captain of the company, the captain escorts the characters through the obstacle course so that they avoid it completely.

SC: Brigands

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

Lord Klavin's lackeys spring an ambush. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

The trail passes a tumbledown cottage with a dilapidated roof and shutters that hang askew from the windows. A rusty pick and shovel jut from a small trash heap of old timbers, broken boards, moldy bed sheets, and other refuse. As you near the cottage, the owlbear stops, paws the earth, and grunts.

Perception DC 22: *There are several humans hiding in various places on both sides of the road. Some peek from the trees, camouflaged in the leaves. Someone moves about inside the cottage, peering through chinks in the wood. It is difficult to say how many are hiding, but you are certain they surround the party.*

These humans are brigands who secretly work for Lord Klavin. Their task is to kill any team that passes this way with an owlbear unless that team wears Lord Klavin's badge. Two brigands hide behind the cottage, one brigand with a crossbow hides inside the (locked) cottage, and three brigands hide in the trees beside or behind the characters. The brigands near the cottage attack with ranged weapons, and the brigands in the trees drop down to attack with melee weapons.

The brigands have been expecting an owlbear team to pass along this route and have taken good care to hide themselves. If the characters fail to notice the brigands at the start of the encounter, the brigands attack in a surprise round. They fight until only two or fewer of their number remain, and then the survivors try to run.

The cottage doors are closed and locked (see cottage map description), but the shutters are open. The archer inside the cottage fires from cover but can be

attacked only through the window or the roof, or if a character finds a way through the door. The archer opens the door only for another brigand if he's certain that none of the characters (or owlbear) can follow that brigand through the door.

If Lord Klavin has sponsored the characters and they wear his badge, the brigands do not attack. If the characters spot them, the brigands assure them that they are Lord Klavin's people and are waiting to ambush one of the other teams.

4 Raven Roost Cutthroats	Level 5 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 200 each
HP 49; Bloodied 24	Initiative +11
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 19, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d4 + 6 damage.	
⚔ Garrote (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Requirement: The cutthroat must not be grabbing a creature.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is grabbed (escape DC 22) until the end of the cutthroat's next turn. Until the grab ends, the cutthroat has superior cover, and neither it nor the target can be pulled, pushed, or slid.	
⚔ Arterial Cut (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the cutthroat). The target takes 2d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). The grab then ends.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Quick Cut ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy escapes the cutthroat's grab.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The cutthroat uses <i>dagger</i> against the triggering enemy.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 20 (+7)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)
	Wis 14 (+4)
	Cha 6 (+0)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common	
Equipment studded leather, dagger, garrote	

Raven Roost Sharpshooter	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250
HP 55; Bloodied 27	Initiative +7
AC 20, Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 17	Perception +10
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage.	
⚔ Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
🎯 Careful Aim ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The sharpshooter chooses an enemy it can see. If it can still see that enemy at the start of its next turn, its crossbow attack power targets the enemy's Reflex, instead of AC, and deals 5 extra damage against it. These benefits last until the end of that turn.	
FREE ACTIONS	
🎯 Archer's Decoy ♦ Recharge when first bloodied	
Effect: The sharpshooter gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the start of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 19 (+7)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 10 (+3)
	Wis 15 (+5)
	Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common	
Equipment studded leather, short sword, crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts	

SR: Dead End Ridge

Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)

The mountain trail leads to an unexpected dead end. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the characters enter the area, read:

You follow the trail deeper into the mountain wilderness, but the farther you travel, the more the forest reclaims the old path; weeds and briars and small trees overgrow the trail until the trail fades away completely, coming to a dead end at the bottom of a ridge. Fifteen or twenty feet above

you, another trail skirts the ridge's edge and continues on course through the mountain woods.

The characters might attempt to climb the ridge, backtrack to the last branch of the trail, or search the ridge face.

Climbing the Ridge: The challenge in climbing the ridge lies in motivating the owlbear to undertake the climb. Any character can climb the ridge by succeeding on a DC 10 Athletics check. The characters can attempt to force or charm the owlbear into climbing the ridge.

Success: The characters move to the next encounter location.

Failure: The characters must turn around or try something else.

Searching the Ridge: The characters can take 5 minutes to search the ridge. Ask each searching character to make a DC 22 Perception check. Any character who succeeds discovers a dwarven rune etched into the rock behind some thick ivy. Pressing the rune causes the stone to slide away, revealing a secret passage into the mines that tunnel through the mountain. If the characters take this shortcut through the mines, they advance to the next encounter and each other team takes a -2 penalty to advancement rolls this round.

If the characters fail the search check, they eventually discover the rune, but each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Turning Around: If the characters are forced to backtrack and find another route, they advance to the next encounter, but they fall behind; each other team gains a +4 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If Lady Fazgahrd has sponsored the characters and they carry the badge she gave them, the rune glows as they approach the ridge, and the characters discover it automatically.

SB: Inspection Point

**Roleplaying Challenge or
Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)**

The sheriff's people hold an inspection point at a bridge. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters approach the inspection point, read:

On the bridge ahead stands a small band of armed humans wearing the colors of Lord Burl. A black-bearded man in chainmail and helm waves you forward.

"Just a routine inspection," he says. "Please cross the bridge in single file, and keep your weapons sheathed unless we ask you to unbind them."

The sheriff's people are patrolling the mountain paths searching for evidence of the dangerous "black naga" drug smuggled through this region. They are conducting a legitimate (albeit time-consuming and thorough) investigation and have legal grounds to hold up any group trying to cross the bridge.

If the characters let the sheriff's people complete their investigation, or if they turn around or take an alternate route, each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Talking through the Checkpoint: It's difficult to convince the sheriff's people to disobey a direct order from their boss, but if the characters offer a compelling argument or a lie, each character can attempt a DC 10 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince the sheriff's people to let them pass. The sheriff's crew will look to each of the characters to verify the story, so each character must succeed on this check or the sheriff's crew continues to conduct its inspection.

Fight: The characters can fight the sheriff's people. If any of the sheriff's people are slain in the fight, however, the characters lose any treasure they would be rewarded at the end of the race (see "Conclusion: The Finish Line"). If the characters win the

fight or cross the bridge and leave the map, they proceed unhindered. If the characters fight Lord Burl's people, use the statistics for 6 town guards (*Monster Vault*, page 171).

If Lord Burl has sponsored the characters and they openly display his badge, the sheriff's people let them pass to the next encounter location without conducting their investigation. Each other team takes a -1 penalty to advancement rolls this round.

OWLBEAR ENCOUNTERS

In "Owlbear Run," the characters experience one owlbear encounter associated with the owlbear they chose. Each owlbear entry includes a minor quest. This is the part of the adventure where the characters get to interact with their owlbear and help it resolve its quest. This event can come in the middle or at the end of the adventure but seldom appears at the beginning unless you want it to (see the "Encounter Order" sidebar at the beginning of the "Encounter Types" section).

OE1: Terrible Tharizdun Is Asleep

Owlbear Challenge

A stag's carcass on the road lures the voracious, hibernating owlbear away from the trail. Use **Map A** (trail map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

As you move along the trail, Terrible Tharizdun suddenly halts and raises his head. Just beyond the tree line, the bloody carcass of a stag lies sprawled on the forest floor. Tharizdun coos and pulls against his harness to get at the feast.

If he is able, the hungry owlbear proceeds to the deer and begins to eat. The characters can prevent Terrible Tharizdun from stopping to eat the deer by using charm tactics at a -5 penalty, by baiting him with any part of the deer carcass, or by offering him all their rations (automatic success). The characters can also use force tactics to pull Terrible Tharizdun away from the carcass; the determined owlbear, however, gains a +2 bonus to his opposed rolls (see "Dealing with Owlbeards"). If Terrible Tharizdun reaches the stag's carcass, he will feast.

Though he is hungry, Terrible Tharizdun takes his time eating the stag. (*Nature DC 12*: The carcass is fresh, and the characters can see recent wolf prints in the soft ground. The wolves that killed the stag were likely frightened by the characters' approach.)

If the characters wait for Tharizdun to finish, each other team gains a +2 bonus to advancement rolls this round. Once Terrible Tharizdun has finished, the owlbear wanders a few yards away and settles down to sleep; the characters can use force or charm tactics to prevent this. If the owlbear falls asleep, each other team gains an additional +2 bonus to advancement rolls (+4 total) this round.

The characters might think of another solution to the problem. Remember that Terrible Tharizdun is strong and stubborn, and forcing or convincing him to move should be difficult (DC 22) and require more than one check. The root of the problem is the owlbear's hunger, however, and solutions that promise to sate the owlbear's appetite should automatically succeed (in other words, if he eats a character).

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters get Terrible Tharizdun to continue the race without stopping to eat the stag or falling asleep, they earn the "Motivate Terrible Tharizdun" quest reward.

OE2: Kitten's Eggs

Owlbear Challenge

Kitten, the pregnant owlbear, needs a nest to lay her eggs. Use **Map B** (cottage map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

A small thatched cottage stands at a bend in the trail. The chopped wood stacked alongside the cottage and the smoke streaming from the chimney indicate that it is occupied. Through the open shutters come the voices of human children at play. Kitten coos, then growls, then coos again, pulling with all her strength toward the cottage.

The cottage is occupied by a human woman named Lora and her three small children. The children play with wooden toys on the floor while the woman prepares a chicken at the table.

The owlbear senses it is time to lay her eggs. She wants to lay them in this cottage, where they will be hidden from forest predators, but first she must drive the humans from their lair. If the characters study Kitten now, a DC 16 Arcana, Insight, Nature, or Perception check reveals that Kitten is pregnant, and the characters gain a +2 bonus to charm tactics used to influence Kitten for the rest of the encounter.

Use the statistics for the human rabble minion in the “Competing Teams” section for the woman Lora, if necessary. Her children have the same AC and hit points as the rabble, but their attacks deal only 1 point of damage.

Restraining Kitten: The characters can use force or charm tactics to restrain the owlbear.

Success: The characters restrain the owlbear. Kitten moans and growls and lies down on the ground, refusing to move.

Failure: Kitten bursts into the house and attacks the woman and children. (If the characters failed a force tactic by 5 or more, the owlbear might attack the characters instead.) Once the woman and her

children have fled the cottage or been slain, Kitten lays her eggs near the hearth.

The Eggs: Regardless of whether Kitten breaks into the cottage, she lays her eggs here, sits on her makeshift nest, and refuses to budge. If the characters use force tactics to move her, the owlbear gains a +5 to her opposed rolls. Alternatively, the characters can use charm tactics to convince the owlbear to let them approach and handle her eggs.

Success: The characters force Kitten to move from her nest or charm the owlbear into allowing them to handle her eggs. Kitten will not leave the eggs behind (she will fight to the death before leaving them), but if the characters take the eggs along, Kitten follows.

Failure: Kitten takes extra time to make a nest from the materials she can find—thatch from the roof, wattle from the walls, rushes from the floor. She does not stir until she becomes hungry, and then she leaves the cottage to hunt. The race proceeds, but each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters prevent Kitten from slaying the cottage occupants and they take her eggs along in the race, they earn the “Save the Children” quest reward.

OE3: Manslayer Is Cornered

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,000 XP)

Owlbear Challenge

Cornered against a ridge, the cowardly owlbear must face his fears. Use **Map C** (ridge map).

When the party starts this encounter, read:

As you race through the woods, shaggy gray shapes keep pace with your party; a pack of hungry dire wolves has caught the scent of your owlbear. As your trail rounds the top of a ridge, the wolves spring their trap, cornering you against the edge of the steep decline. Terrified, the owlbear shrieks and struggles against his harness.

5 Dire Wolves	Level 5 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount)	XP 200 each
HP 67; Bloodied 33	Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 8	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Pack Harrier	
The wolf has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to two or more of the wolf's allies.	
Pack Hunter (mount)	
The wolf's rider has combat advantage against any enemy that is adjacent to one of the rider's allies other than the wolf.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 3d8 + 4 against a prone target.	
The target falls prone if the wolf has combat advantage against it.	
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5)
Con 19 (+6)	Int 5 (-1)
	Wis 14 (+4)
	Cha 11 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

The dire wolves attack the owlbear; they attack only characters who stand in their way, attack, or hinder them. Manslayer cowers as the wolves attack, but it should be clear to the players that an owlbear could easily kill a dire wolf if it fought back.

The characters can use force or charm tactics to motivate Manslayer to fight back.

First Success: Manslayer stops cowering and stands up, though he remains intimidated by the wolves.

Second Success: Manslayer assumes a threatening appearance, screeching and growling at the wolves.

Third Success: Manslayer fights back against the wolves.

Failure: If the characters fail, Manslayer leaps from the ridge in an attempt to escape and takes 2d10 falling damage. He then flees the map at the first opportunity. If he is not killed by dire wolves and escapes the battle, the characters must search for him in the woods; each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

If Manslayer survives the encounter, he finds his courage. For the remainder of the race, he defends himself from attackers. He can also be convinced to fight the characters' enemies (see "Owlbears in Combat").

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters get Manslayer to fight the dire wolves, they earn the "Help Manslayer Find His Courage" quest reward.

OE4: Lucky Lady Is Reunited

Skill Challenge Level 5 (200 XP)
Owlbear Challenge

Lucky Lady encounters her mate, from which she has been separated since her capture. Use **Map D** (bridge/stream map).

When the characters start this encounter, read:

As you near a bridge that spans a small stream, Lucky Lady's tufted ears prick up and the owlbear rises on its haunches, owl eyes wide, focused on something beyond the bridge. Then you see it: a huge male owlbear on the edge of the forest, crashing through the bracken. When he spots your owlbear, it rises up on its haunches and screeches. Lucky Lady mirrors the male's movement—she rises up and screeches back.

This male owlbear is Lucky Lady's mate. When Lucky Lady and the male owlbear spot one another, Lucky Lady strains against her harness. The characters can try to restrain her using force or charm tactics, attempt to communicate or empathize with the male owlbear, scare him away, or watch and wait. (Feel free to improvise other solutions the characters devise.)

An Arcana, Nature, or Perception check (DC 15) reveals that the male owlbear is alternately calling to his mate and issuing a challenge to the characters, whom it perceives to be a threat to his mate.

The characters can prove they are not a threat in one of the following ways.

- ◆ **Communicate/Empathize (Nature DC 22):** A character can calm the male owlbear by touching him and speaking to him gently.
- ◆ **Calm Lucky Lady (charm or force tactics):** The characters calm Lucky Lady. The male owlbear crosses the bridge. If the characters allow him to do so, the male owlbear approaches Lucky Lady, stops in front of her, and sniffs.
- ◆ **Release Lucky Lady (DC 10 group Nature check in which at least half the characters succeed):** If the characters release Lucky Lady, she meets her mate on the bridge. The male assesses the characters to see if they still pose a threat.
- ◆ **Scare Away (DC 15 group Intimidate check in which at least half the characters succeed):** The characters can spook the male owlbear by growling, beating their weapons, discharging spells, and so forth. If the characters fail, the male owlbear attacks.

Success: If the characters successfully convince the male owlbear that they are not a threat to his mate, the male owlbear calms. It nuzzles Lucky Lady and grunts at the characters before returning to the forest. If any check fails by 5 or more, the male owlbear attacks.

Failure: If the characters fail to convince the male owlbear that they does not pose a threat to his mate, the male owlbear attacks (but Lucky Lady does not attack unless the characters have treated her cruelly). Each other team gains a +3 bonus to advancement rolls this round.

Minor Quest Reward: If the characters successfully convince the male owlbear they do not pose a threat to his mate and they allow the owlbears a moment together, they earn the "Reunite Lucky Lady with Her Mate" quest reward.

CONCLUSION: THE FINISH LINE

At the end of the race, the spoils go to the victor.

If the characters win the race, read:

You have brought your owlbear through many trials, and now the town of Milvorn sprawls before you beneath the eastern slopes of the mountain. You pick up speed in your descent, barreling down the mountain like a mob of drunken gods.

And gods you are, at least in Milvorn. The crowd cheers as you reach the town gate. Your triumphant owlbear echoes the cry, screeching victoriously over the applause as gold coins fall at your feet like enormous glittering raindrops.

If the characters lose the race, read:

Despite your best efforts, due to an uncooperative owlbear, the wizards' tricks, and the sponsors' schemes, your crafty opponents have carried the day. You arrive in Milvorn to discover another team standing at the gates with its owlbear, basking in the adoration of the crowd.

As you consider what to do next, a messenger arrives with a summons from the duke and a proposition for lucrative employment. It seems that your greatness has not gone unnoticed after all.

If the characters finish the race first, they gain the quest reward, "Win the Owlbear Run." If the characters paid 5,000 gp to participate in the race, they gain it back. The winner of the race gains 2,500 gp for each other team that participated in the race (7,500 gp total if all three NPC teams participated). In addition, the characters' sponsor grants each character a magic item of the character's level +2 (player's choice).

If the characters finish the race second, they gain back their entire entry fee. **If they finish third,** they gain back half their entry fee. If the characters had a sponsor who fronted their entry fee, they gain nothing.

Regardless of how they placed, the characters gain an audience with Duke Hightower and establish a relationship with the sponsor they chose. Impressed by their performance, the duke or sponsor can give the characters a lead to future adventures.

The Owlbear's Fate: When the race is finished, the characters learn that the owlbears are to be released into the wild. Depending on the characters' relationship with their owlbear, you might consider bringing it into the campaign as a recurring character or at higher levels as a companion character or a trained mount.

About the Authors

Christopher Perkins is the D&D senior producer at Wizards of the Coast and has been contributing to *Dungeon* magazine for two-thirds of his life. He liked *The Cannonball Run* when he was a kid, and is afraid to watch it as an adult for fear he might still like it.

Steve Townshend is an award-winning freelance D&D designer whose recent credits include *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*, *Madness at Gardmore Abbey™*, and *Heroes of the Feywild™*. The banderhobbs and Oublivae, Demon Queen of Desolation, are two of his favorite creations for D&D.



A promotional banner for Dungeons & Dragons Online. The background is a dark, atmospheric scene with a large, glowing green dragon head in the upper right. In the foreground, a female warrior on the left wields a glowing sword, and a male archer on the right aims a bow. A small, winged figure is visible in the distance. The text 'FREE ONLINE PLAY!' is prominently displayed in large, golden, serif letters in the upper left. At the bottom, the 'Dungeons & Dragons ONLINE' logo is centered, featuring the iconic ampersand. Below the logo, the text 'Customize and Play a Unique Hero from 100s of Race and Class Combos' is written in a golden, serif font, followed by the website 'www.ddo.com'.



7. GEYSERS AND CHAINS

The door opens onto a stone platform in a large natural cave. Opposite the entrance in the distance is another stone platform. Between them, a series of wooden disks is suspended from the ceiling by massive steel chains. The cave floor seems to be covered by a pool of boiling mud.

The ceiling is 50 feet above the level of the platforms. The cave floor is 50 feet below. Two spots in the mud are the locations of geysers. The northern one erupts once every 5 minutes, the southern one every 3 minutes. The stone platform opposite the entrance is approximately 90 feet away.

The disks are about 4 feet in diameter and 3 feet apart. Each disk is attached to its chain by a giant staple fixed in its center. The disks swing freely and will tilt when weight is placed upon them.

The disks and the chains, as well as the walls of the cavern, are covered with a wet, slippery algal scum. This coating gives off a feeble phosphorescent glow. Climbing the chains or the walls requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

When the geysers erupt, they reach nearly to the roof of the cavern, and creatures holding onto the disks or the chains might be washed off to fall into the boiling mud. The damage a creature takes from a geyser depends on how close a creature is to the geyser when it erupts (see the table below). Creatures that succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw take half damage.

In addition, a creature that is on a disk or holding onto a chain when a geyser erupts must succeed on a Strength saving throw (see the table for DCs) or be knocked off and fall into the boiling mud.

Location	Damage	DC
Adjacent to geyser	27 (5d10) fire damage	14
One disk away	22 (4d10) fire damage	13
Two disks away	16 (3d10) fire damage	12
Three disks away	11 (2d10) fire damage	11
Four disks away	5 (1d10) fire damage	10
Anywhere else in the area	3 (1d6) fire damage	—

Any creature that falls into the boiling mud takes 44 (8d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns for as long as it remains in the mud.

Unearthed Arcana: Feats & Subclasses Part 4

Sharing playtest possibilities for proposed new character feats.

Taymoor Rehman, Jeremy Crawford, Ben Petrisor, Dan Dillon, and Ari Levitch



Playtest Material

The material here is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not refined by final game development and editing. They aren't officially part of the game and aren't permitted in D&D Adventurers League events.

If we decide to make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

Feats

When a player character reaches a certain level in a class, they gain access to the Ability Score Improvement feature. Using the optional feats rule, a player can decide not to increase their stats and take a feat of their choice instead. This issue's playtest material includes **fifteen new feats** for Dungeon Masters and players to try out in their private games.

A feat represents a talent or an area of expertise that gives the character special capabilities. These skills may have come through training, experience beyond what their class usually provides, or by simply discovering the ability to do something completely new. Some feats include a prerequisite that a character must meet in order to take the feat, such as a minimum stat score or the ability to cast a spell.

The varied list of new feats includes: Artificer Initiate; Chef; Crusher; Eldritch Adept; Fey Touched; Fighting Initiate; Gunner; Metamagic Adept; Piercer; Poisoner; Practiced Expert; Shadow Touched; Shield Training; Slasher; Tandem Tactician; and Tracker. Access the proposed new playtest options by downloading the PDF.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)



Mouser) anyone?"

“It’s exciting to see Feats returning to Unearthed Arcana as they can enhance the flavor and fun of a character without the need for multi-classing. Practiced Expert seems perfect for anyone with a little bit of rogue in them. Who wouldn’t want their barbarian to gain expertise in Stealth and proficiency with thieves’ tools. Fafhrd (and the Grey



Subclasses, Part 4

Two spooky subclasses have appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, following the three significant subclass updates we previously **featured in *Dragon+*** for the barbarian, monk, paladin, warlock, bard, cleric, and sorcerer. The new College of Spirits allows bards to gather

stories from the dead, while The Undead subclass allows warlocks to choose a major supernatural being as their patron.

College of Spirits

Stories of the past are powerful. They hold lessons of history, philosophy, and magic. Bards of the College of Spirits seek the stories of those from beyond the material plane. They reach out to hear these beings' tales, but have no control over which story they find.

When this subclass gains the Bardic College feature at 3rd level, they reach out to spirits to advise themselves and others, learning the *guidance* cantrip. They can also employ special tools to contact these spirits, using a candle, a crystal ball, a talking board, a Tarokka deck, or a skull as a spellcasting focus.

While the bards hold this spiritual focus, the spirits can tell their tales through them. Expending one use of Bardic Inspiration as a bonus action allows them to roll on the Spirits' Tales table. The result of that die determines the tale that is told, with options from one to twelve available as that die increases in value as the bards become more powerful. For example, hearing and reciting the tale of a clever animal (the first result on the table) gives a target advantage on both Perception checks and attack rolls, while an incomprehensible fable from a being beyond the stars (the 12th result) might deal psychic damage equal to three rolls of the Bardic Inspiration die to a creature within 30 feet.

At 6th level, bard spells cast using the focus that deal damage or restore hit points can add an extra d6. A College of Spirits bard can also channel spirits to gain insights into magic, conducting an hour-long ritual to temporarily learn one spell of their choice from any class. At even higher levels this mystical connection to spirits becomes semi-permanent, allowing tales to be told without expending a Bardic Inspiration die.

The Undead

An undead patron is an entity that resides in the dark corners of the multiverse. It could be Acererak, Azalin, Lord Soth, Strahd, or some other ancient undead being. While warlocks may seek to gain

knowledge from these patrons' countless lifetimes of experience, the patrons themselves might view the warlock as part of a centuries-long plan.

A warlock with an undead patron can choose from an expanded list of spells (1st: *bane*, *false life*; 2nd: *blindness/deafness*, *phantasmal force*; 3rd: *speak with dead*, *phantom steed*; 4th: *death ward*, *greater invisibility*; 5th: *antilife shell*, *cloudkill*). From 1st level they can also manifest an aspect of their patron's dreadful power, transforming as a bonus action for one minute to gain temporary hit points, frighten enemies, and become immune to being frightened themselves.

At 6th level the warlock no longer needs to eat, drink, or breathe, as their patron's powers have a profound effect on them. They can also deal necrotic damage when they hit with any attack, adding one additional damage die if they have taken the form of their patron.

At 10th level their connection to undeath and necrotic energy now saturates their bodies, providing resistance or immunity to necrotic damage. When they are reduced to zero hit points, they can also cause their body to explode and damage each creature within 30 feet, reviving with one hit point in their previous space with one level of exhaustion.

At higher levels their body is now simply a vessel for their spirit. They can project this spirit and leave their unconscious body in a state of suspended animation. This spirit can fly and hover, move through creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain, cast conjuration or necromancy spells (without requiring verbal, somatic, or material components), and regain hit points if dealing damage in their patron's form.

DOWNLOAD THE PDF

To see the full treasure trove of *Unearthed Arcana* articles, covering new classes and feats, conversions of rules from previous editions, and much more, [visit the archive](#).

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UNEARTHED ARCANA 2020

Feats

This document presents new feats for you to playtest. A feat represents a character achieving mastery in one of their capabilities or discovering the ability to do something completely new.

Playtest Material

The material in this article is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not refined by full game development.

This material is not officially part of the game. For these reasons, it is not legal in D&D Adventurers League events.

Artificer Initiate

You've learned some of an artificer's inventiveness, granting you the following benefits:

- You learn one cantrip of your choice from the artificer spell list, and you learn one 1st-level spell of your choice from that list. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells. Whenever you gain a level, you can replace one of these spells with another spell of the same level from the artificer spell list.
- You can cast this feat's 1st-level spell without a spell slot, and you must finish a long rest before you can cast it in this way again. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.
- You gain proficiency with one type of artisan's tools of your choice, and you can use that type of tool as a spellcasting focus for any spell you cast that uses Intelligence as its spellcasting ability.

Chef

Time and effort spent mastering the culinary arts has paid off. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution or Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with cook's utensils if you don't already have it.

- As part of a short rest, you can cook special food, provided you have ingredients and cook's utensils on hand. You can prepare enough of this food for a number of creatures equal to 4 + your proficiency bonus. At the end of the short rest, any creature who eats the food and spends one or more Hit Dice to regain hit points regains an extra 1d8 hit points.
- With one hour of work or when you finish a long rest, you can cook a number of treats equal to your proficiency bonus. These special treats last 8 hours after being made. A creature can use a bonus action to eat one of those treats to gain temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Crusher

You are practiced in the art of crushing your enemies, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack that deals bludgeoning damage, you can move it 5 feet to an unoccupied space, provided the target is no more than one size larger than you.
- When you score a critical hit that deals bludgeoning damage to a creature, attack rolls against that creature are made with advantage until the end of your next turn.

Eldritch Adept

Prerequisite: Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature

Studying occult lore, you have unlocked eldritch power within yourself: you learn one Eldritch Invocation option of your choice from the warlock class. If the invocation has a prerequisite, you can choose that invocation only if you're a warlock and only if you meet the prerequisite.

Whenever you gain a level, you can replace the invocation with another one from the warlock class.

Fey Touched

Your exposure to the Feywild or one of its denizens has left a magical mark on you. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn the *misty step* spell and one 1st-level spell of your choice. The 1st-level spell must be from the divination or enchantment school of magic. You can cast each of these spells without expending a spell slot. Once you cast either of these spells in this way, you can't cast that spell in this way again until you finish a long rest. You can also cast these spells using spell slots you have of the appropriate level. The spells' spellcasting ability is the ability increased by this feat.

Fighting Initiate

Prerequisite: Proficiency with a martial weapon

Your martial training has helped you develop a particular style of fighting. As a result, you learn one Fighting Style option of your choice from the fighter class. If you already have a style, the one you choose must be different.

Whenever you gain a level, you can replace this feat's fighting style with another one from the fighter class that you don't have.

Gunner

You have a quick hand and keen eye when employing firearms, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with firearms (see "Firearms" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).
- You ignore the loading property of firearms.
- Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged attack rolls.

Metamagic Adept

Prerequisite: Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature

You've learned how to exert your will on your spells to alter how they function. You gain the following benefits:

- You learn two Metamagic options of your choice from the sorcerer class. You can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when you cast it, unless the option says otherwise. Whenever you gain a level, you can replace one of your Metamagic options with another one from the sorcerer class.
- You gain 2 sorcery points to spend on Metamagic (these points are added to any sorcery points you have from another source but can be used only on Metamagic). You regain all spent sorcery points when you finish a long rest.

Piercer

You have achieved a penetrating precision in combat, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack that deals piercing damage, you can reroll one of the attack's damage dice, and you must use the new roll.
- When you score a critical hit that deals piercing damage to a creature, you can roll one additional damage die when determining the extra piercing damage the target takes.

Poisoner

You can prepare and deliver deadly poisons, gaining the following benefits:

- When you make a damage roll, you ignore resistance to poison damage.
- You can coat a weapon in poison as a bonus action, instead of an action.
- You gain proficiency with the poisoner's kit if you don't already have it. With one hour of work using a poisoner's kit and expending 50 gp worth of materials, you can create a number of doses of potent poison equal to your proficiency bonus. Once applied, the poison retains potency for 1 minute or until

you hit with the weapon. When a weapon coated in this poison deals damage to a creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 2d8 poison damage and become poisoned until the end of your next turn.

Practiced Expert

You have honed your proficiency with particular skills or tools, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase one ability score of your choice by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with one skill or tool of your choice.
- Choose one of your skill or tool proficiencies. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the chosen proficiency.

Shadow Touched

You learn how to bend shadows from your experience with the Shadowfell. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn the *darkness* spell and one 1st-level spell of your choice. The 1st-level spell must be from the illusion or necromancy school of magic. You can cast each of these spells without expending a spell slot. Once you cast either of these spells in this way, you can't cast that spell in this way again until you finish a long rest. You can also cast these spells using spell slots you have of the appropriate level. The spells' spellcasting ability is the ability increased by this feat.

Shield Training

You've trained in the effective use of shields. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with shields.
- In combat, you can don or doff a shield as the free object interaction on your turn.
- If you have the Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature, you can use a shield as a spellcasting focus.

Slasher

You've learned where to cut to have the greatest results, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Once per turn when you hit a creature with an attack that deals slashing damage, you can reduce the speed of the target by 10 feet until the start of your next turn.
- When you score a critical hit that deals slashing damage to a creature, you grievously wound it. Until the start of your next turn, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Tandem Tactician

Your presence in a scrap tends to elevate your comrades. You gain the following benefits:

- You can use the Help action as a bonus action.
- When you use the Help action to aid an ally in attacking a creature, increase the range of the Help action by 10 feet. Additionally, you can help two allies targeting the same creature within range when you use the Help action this way.

Tracker

You have spent time hunting creatures and honed your skills, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn the *hunter's mark* spell. You can cast it once without expending a spell slot, and you must finish a long rest before you can cast it in this way again. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.
- You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track creatures.

UNEARTHED ARCANA 2020

Subclasses, Part 4

This Is Playtest Material

The material in this article is presented for playtesting and to spark your imagination. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not refined by full game design and editing. They aren't officially part of the game and aren't permitted in D&D Adventurers League events.

If we decide to make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- The character options you read here might be more or less powerful than options in the *Player's Handbook*. If a design survives playtesting, we adjust its power to the desirable level before official publication.
- In early playtests such as this, character options are rarely tuned for multiclassing. We are nonetheless interested in multiclass-related feedback, accounting for it if we finalize the design for publication.

This document provides two playtest options:

College of Spirits, a new bard subclass that learns stories from spirits

The Undead, a new warlock subclass whose patron is an undead being

Bard

At 3rd level, a bard gains the Bardic College feature. Here is a playtest option for that feature: the College of Spirits.

College of Spirits

Stories of the past are powerful; they hold lessons of history, philosophy, and magic. Bards of the College of Spirits seek the stories of those from beyond the material plane. Using gaming sets, they reach out to hear their stories, but the bards have no control over what story they find.

Guiding Whispers

3rd-level College of Spirits

You can reach out to spirits to guide you and others. You learn the *guidance* cantrip, which doesn't count against the number of bard

cantrips you know. For you, it has a range of 60 feet when you cast it.

Spiritual Focus

3rd- and 6th-level College of Spirits feature

Your practice of contacting spirits can employ special tools. You can use the following objects as a spellcasting focus for your bard spells: a candle, a crystal ball, a talking board, a tarokka deck, or a skull.

At 6th level, when you cast a bard spell that deals damage or restores hit points through the Spiritual Focus, roll a d6, and you gain a bonus to one roll of the spell equal to the number rolled.

Tales from Beyond

3rd-level College of Spirits feature

You reach out to spirits who tell their tales through you. While you are holding your Spiritual Focus, you can use a bonus action to expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration and roll on the Spirits' Tales table using your Bardic Inspiration die to determine the tale told. You retain the tale in mind until you bestow the tale's effect or you finish a short or long rest.

You can use an action to choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of you (this can be you) to be the target of the tale's effect. Once you do so, you can't bestow the tale's effect again until you roll it again.

You can retain only one of these tales in mind at a time, and rolling on the Spirits' Tales table immediately ends the effect of the previous tale.

If the tale requires a saving throw, the DC equals your spell save DC.

Spirits' Tales

Bardic

Insp. Die	Tale
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1	Beast. You recite the tale of a clever animal. For 1 minute, the target has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and advantage on attack rolls against a creature if another enemy is within 5 feet of it, and that enemy isn't incapacitated.
---	--

2 **Warrior.** You recount the story of a renowned duelist. Make a melee spell attack against the target as an attacking spectral warrior briefly appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target before vanishing. On a hit, the target takes force damage equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die + your Charisma modifier.

3 **Friends.** You recite the tale of friends who found each other in the afterlife. The target and another creature of its choice it can see within 5 feet of it regains hit points equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die + your Charisma modifier.

4 **Runaway.** You tell the tale of an adventurer that could escape any confinement. The target can immediately use its reaction to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. When the target teleports, it can choose a number of creatures it can see within 30 feet of it up to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) to immediately use the same reaction.

5 **Avenger.** You recount the tale of an avenging knight. For 1 minute, whenever a creature the target can see within 30 feet of it is damaged by a creature, the target can use its reaction to deal force damage equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die to the attacker.

6 **Hero.** You speak the tale of an epic hero. Choose a creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The target gains temporary hit points equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die + your bard level. While it has these temporary hit points, the target's walking speed increases by 10 feet.

7 **Fey.** You recount the tale of a mischievous fey. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by you until the end of its next turn. The charmed target must use its action to make a melee attack against a creature other than itself that you mentally choose. The target can act normally on its turn if you choose no other creature.

8 **Dark Spirit.** You speak a dreadful tale of a slayer in the dark. The target becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it hits a creature with an attack. If it hits a creature with an attack during this invisibility, that creature takes necrotic damage equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die and is frightened of the target until the end of its next turn.

9 **Giant.** You speak of the deeds of a mighty giant. Each creature of the target's choice it can see within 30 feet of it must make a Strength saving throw, taking force damage equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die on a failed save and is knocked prone. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

10 **Dragon.** You breathe a poem of a wrathful dragon. The target magically spews fire from their mouth in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking fire damage equal to three rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

11 **Celestial.** You speak of the exalted deeds of a celestial. The target regains hit points equal to two rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die + your bard level, and you end one disease or a condition from the following list affecting the target: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, petrified, or poisoned.

12 **Unknown.** You utter an incomprehensible fable from a being beyond the stars. Choose a creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or take psychic damage equal to three rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die, and the target is unable to speak any language for 1 minute.

Spirit Session

6th-level College of Spirits feature

You can channel spirits to gain insights into magic. You can conduct an hour-long ritual channeling spirits (which can be done during a short or long rest) using your Spiritual Focus.

You can conduct the ritual with a number of creatures equal to your proficiency bonus (including yourself). At the end of the ritual, you temporarily learn one spell of your choice from any class.

The spell you choose must be of a level equal to the number of creatures that conducted the ritual or less, the spell must of a level you can cast, and it must be in the school of divination or necromancy. The chosen spell counts as a bard spell for you but doesn't count against the number of bard spells you know.

Once you perform the ritual, you can't do so again until you start a long rest, and you know the chosen spell until you start a long rest.

Mystical Connection

14th-level College of Spirits feature

Your connection to spirits has become semi-permanent. Whenever you use your Tales from Beyond feature, you can roll a d6 and use it instead of expending a Bardic Inspiration die. You still use your Bardic Inspiration die for the tale's effect, without expending it.

Warlock

At 1st level, a warlock gains the Otherworldly Patron feature. Here is a playtest option for that feature: the Undead.

The Undead

The Undead is an entity that resides in the dark corners of the multiverse. Your patron could be Acererak, Azalin, Lord Soth, Strahd, or some other ancient undead being. You may seek to gain knowledge from your patron's countless lifetimes of experience, while it may see you as a piece of a centuries long plan.

Expanded Spell List

1st-level Undead feature

The Undead lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Undead Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>bane, false life</i>
2nd	<i>blindness/deafness, phantasmal force</i>
3rd	<i>speak with dead, phantom steed</i>
4th	<i>death ward, greater invisibility</i>
5th	<i>antilife shell, cloudkill</i>

Form of Dread

1st-level Undead feature

You manifest an aspect of your patron's dreadful power. As a bonus action, you transform for 1 minute. You gain the following benefits while transformed:

- You gain temporary hit points equal to 1d10 + your warlock level.
- Once during each of your turns, when you hit a creature with an attack, you can force it to make a Wisdom saving throw, and if the saving throw fails, the target is frightened of you until the end of your next turn.
- You are immune to the frightened condition.

You can transform a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

The appearance of your Form of Dread reflects some aspect of your patron. For example, your form could be a shroud of shadows forming the crown and robes of your lich patron, or your face might transform into bat-like features due to your vampire patron.

Grave Touched

6th-level Undead feature

Your patron's powers have a profound effect on your body and magic. You don't need to eat, drink, or breathe.

In addition, when you hit a creature with an attack and roll damage against the creature, you can replace the damage type with necrotic damage. While you are using your Form of Dread, you can roll one additional damage die when determining the necrotic damage the target takes.

Mortal Husk

10th-level Undead feature

Your connection to undeath and necrotic energy now saturates your body. You have resistance to necrotic damage. If you are transformed using your Form of Dread, you instead become immune to necrotic damage.

In addition, when you are reduced to 0 hit points, you can cause your body to explode. Each creature within 30 feet of you takes necrotic damage equal to $2d10 +$ your warlock level. You then revive with 1 hit point in your previous space, along with your gear, and you gain 1 level of exhaustion. Once you revive this way, you can't do so again until you finish 1d4 long rests.

Spirit Projection

14th-level Undead feature

Your body is now simply a vessel for your spirit. As an action, you can project your spirit from your body. The body you leave behind is unconscious and in a state of suspended animation.

Your spirit can remain outside your body for up to 1 hour or until your concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell). When your projection ends, your spirit returns to your body or your body magically teleports to your spirit's space (your choice).

While projecting your spirit, you gain the following benefits:

- Your spirit and body gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- When you cast a spell of the conjuration or necromancy school, the spell doesn't require verbal, somatic, or material components that lack a gold cost.
- You have a flying speed equal to your walking speed and can hover. You can move through creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain, but you take $1d10$ force damage if you end your turn inside a creature or an object.
- While you are using your Form of Dread, once during each of your turns when you deal necrotic damage to a creature, you regain hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.



HAPPY JACK'S FUNHOUSE



A thrill ride of an adventure for the world's greatest
roleplaying game.

REMLEY FARR & JEFF C. STEVENS

HAPPY JACK'S FUNHOUSE

Version 1.3

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USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

No specific location is mentioned in this supplement, making it easy to insert into most campaigns.

Text in these yellow boxes is to be read to players.

Text in grey boxes is for the DM only and should not be read to players.

Most of the creatures in this adventure are found in the 5th Edition *Monster Manual*. Page numbers have been included for easy reference but depending on the printing edition of your *Monster Manual*, they may not match.

In addition, several new creatures have been created for this supplement. They are noted in **BOLD** with no *Monster Manual* reference. You can find these creature stat blocks at the end of the adventure in the **Creatures of the Funhouse** appendix.

Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

MAPS

Unless otherwise noted, for all maps:
1 square = 5 feet.

USING NPCs

During the adventure the party is introduced to several NPCs. These NPCs can follow the party throughout the adventure, but they may become a nuisance.

AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL

The **Average Party Level (APL)** can be used to calculate the appropriate challenge level for your party. To calculate the APL, add the total levels of all characters and divide the sum by the number of characters (rounding up for .5 or greater).

SKILL CHECKS AND SAVING THROWS

Specific DCs are written for each of the encounters. You may wish to change these DCs based on the APL of the adventuring party. We suggest the below range:

APL	Check / Save DC
1 st thru 3 rd	11
4 th thru 6 th	13
7 th thru 9 th	16
10 th thru 12 th	19
13 th thru 15 th	22

In addition, if you feel a skill check or saving throw DC is too low or too high, feel free to adjust the DC as you wish.

CHARACTER HISTORY INFORMATION

We've attached an information sheet at the end of this adventure, which may be useful if you want to use the characters' childhood history.

Have your players fill out the information sheet prior to running this adventure. This information may come in handy and add a level of emotion to the game. Having background information never hurts. Even if you don't use this information during *Happy Jack's Funhouse*, you may find a use for it later.

YOU ARE THE DUNGEON MASTER

As mentioned above, you do not have to run this adventure as written. You are empowered to make changes as you wish – adjusting the encounters as the game is played, if you like. If you think the Funhouse is too big, cut out a room or two. If the threats are too easy, give them additional hit points or an extra attack.

FIND ANY ERRORS?

We tried to make this perfect but I'm sure we missed a thing or two. If you find something, or just have a question, send me an email:

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ADVENTURE PRIMER

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.

- H.P. Lovecraft

BACKGROUND

Count Strahd von Zarovich of Barovia led a life of such infamy and violence that he forever stained the surname 'von Zarovich'. The unlucky others throughout the land who bear the name meet with scorn, prejudice, and in some cases violence. Such was the case for Vilma and Brendan von Zarovich.

Having made a deal with a Vistani porter to leave Barovia, the newlyweds travelled to the Forgotten Realms where they had their first and only child – a boy born with a crooked nose and poor eyesight – Jack.

Jack suffered many hardships while growing up. As one can imagine, he was often bullied because of his name and quirky nose. He also lived in poverty – his parents finding it difficult to procure meaningful jobs as Barovian immigrants.

Jack eventually learned to use the infamy of his name to make a bit of coin. At first, he performed simple magic tricks in the streets, next to a wooden sign that read 'von Zarovich the Magnificent'. His tricks weren't very good, and his stumbling and bumbling routine was often more the entertainment than the magic, so the onlookers dropped a few coins for the laughs.

Jack invested his earnings, purchasing better equipment, clothing, and hiring an assistant – an old woman named Reaver, a fellow Barovian. Reaver has much to do with Jack's current success, and she has helped him procure many of the strange beings that inhabit his signature magic attraction, his Funhouse.

Eventually, Jack dropped von Zarovich from the title of his act, deciding to simply call himself 'Jack the Magnificent'. Due to the people's prejudices, this helped attendance, but not by much.

As Jack and Reaver travelled the Forgotten Realms, he picked up several talents from fellow bards and performers. He learned the arts of performance makeup, tumbling, dancing, and a few sleight-of-hand tricks. Reaver revealed a knowledge for the dark arts, and tempted Jack with her forbidden secrets. Jack found he had a knack for dark magic and began adding some simple spells to his act by causing ground tremors, flickering flames, furniture to move about, or a window to fly open at just the right time to add even more wonder to his acts.

Jack wanted to learn more magic, and Reaver was happy to oblige. The old Barovian, actually a Vistani witch, divulged her spellbinding secrets to Jack, twisting his mind towards a madness that nothing could halt.

Jack's act eventually turned into a grand, traveling amusement which he named Happy Jack's Funhouse. Following his success, the man is now hardly ever seen without his performance makeup. In his art, Jack found the way to hide his true self, that once pestered and bullied boy who was robbed of an "innocent" childhood. The persecuted boy inside is now forever hidden, caked behind a pale bandage of greasepaint and color.

Jack carries his Funhouse – a magical satchel which unfolds into a 20-foot-tall, 60-foot-long, and 2-foot-deep ornate and colorful façade leading to a pocket dimension. Many of the occupants of Jack's Funhouse joined Jack willingly, at Reaver's behest, as they too wanted to escape ridicule and shame for what they were. Jack saw them as amazing creatures. Wonders of the world.

They would have a home and fear no more.

PART 1: THE BEGINNING

This section assumes the adventures happen upon the small village or town while they travel to their next destination.

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR

Happy Jack arrived a few days ago, carrying a green and red checkerboard satchel and riding a horse whose saddle is festooned with jingle bells of all sizes.

As Happy Jack rode into the village, he waved, laughed, and tossed small candies to the youngsters who came to see him riding the jingling horse.

He tied his horse to the hitching post at the local tavern, left a few fliers about his Funhouse, and received permission from the mayor to set up his exhibit in the town square. He promised fun, tasty foods, brilliant lights, music, and, of course, a Funhouse to enter and explore. The mayor gladly accepted; she'd seen Happy Jack perform when they were both younger, as a standalone magic tricks and joke show on a street corner. The mayor recalled the joy it had brought her. A smile formed across her face as she gave Happy Jack permission.

Happy Jack placed his satchel along a far side of the town square and spoke the words "Let the fun begin!" The satchel hopped about the ground and unfolded into a 60-foot-tall, 120-foot-long, and 1-foot-wide building painted with pink hippos, a swarm of snakes, a mechanical man carrying a strange tool or weapon, and hundreds of multi-colored dots the size of cantaloupes. All around a 15-foot tall, 15-foot-wide smiling face, its mouth open and painted black.

Jack then removed a small wooden toy from his pocket, placed it on the ground, and snapped his fingers. The small toy grew into a cart large enough to hold 9 people. The cart sat

on two metal rails, but the rails didn't lead anywhere. They stopped at the front and rear of the cart.

The village had a fantastic time the first day. Everyone enjoyed the rare foods: feather candy, sweet dogs, candied apples, sticky corn, and deep-fried pies. The main attraction and the bizarre way of entering it was a hit, too.

To enter the 1-foot-thick Funhouse, you had to sit in the cart. Once you pulled the safety harness tight, the rails under the cart extended into a massive, twisted metal framework, which the cart rode upon at great speeds. The cart ride featured tight turns, looping loops, and steep drops throughout town until riders reached the painted mouth of Happy Jack's Funhouse. When the cart hit the mouth, a bright light flashed, and a voice yelled out "Yum!" allowing the cart to enter a pocket dimension leading to the real Happy Jack's Funhouse.

Once inside, the villagers experienced all manner of oddity and supernatural – a hippopotamus, a snake person, a slippery-slide, a mirrored room, a mechanical man, a pit filled with colorful balls.

Little did the village know that Happy Jack was about to succumb to a horrible plot woven by his mentor, Reaver. The old hag, disguised as a carnival worker, had been twisting Jack's mind for years. Jack broke a day ago. His mind and body believe he needs a child's laughter to make him happy, to feel alive. Jack has abducted many of the children in the village, keeping them entertained in the lower level of his Funhouse.

The parents all gather in the tavern, discussing their options when the party arrives.

WHO IS HAPPY JACK?

A successful **Intelligence (History)** check reveals the following (Bards have advantage on the check):

D20 Result	Result (results are cumulative, revealing all information from lower DCs)
10-11	I've heard of a clown called Happy Jack.
12-15	He and his zoo-like attraction travel from town to town.
16-19	He's only seen in his whiteface makeup.
20+	I saw him when I was younger, only then he was going by von Zarovich the Magnificent.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several ways this adventure can be introduced into your ongoing campaign:

- The party stumbles upon a quiet, lonely village. Bright lights flash from the center of the village, while the whistling tune of a happy organ grinder floats on the air.
- The party is sent to investigate a village after a person stumbles into a tavern or inn, claiming children have been abducted from a neighboring village. The person tells of the strange clown and the odd Funhouse.
- Happy Jack is currently in the home village of one of the party members. Perhaps, one of the PCs siblings or relatives are one of the abducted children.

ADVENTURE BREAKDOWN

The adventure is made up of four parts:

Part 1: The Beginning

Part 2: The Funhouse

Part 3: Deep Barovia

Part 4: Confronting Jack

LET THE FUN BEGIN!

When you are ready to begin the adventure, read or summarize the following:

As you enter the town, you notice red, green, and blue flashing lights, bouncing off low-hanging clouds coming from the town square.

The smell of sweets and grilled foods, along with the faint notes of a pipe organ, dance on the air.

THE PARENTS

The parents of the eight children all gather in one location – a tavern, inn, or store. Once they see the adventurers in the town, they come out and wave them down. They explain what’s happened and ask for help. They don’t want to enter the Funhouse again because they don’t want to upset Happy Jack. They fear he may do something to the children, and they aren’t experienced adventurers.

We’ve been too scared to enter, and we don’t want to make Happy Jack mad! We know WE can’t defeat him or save our children.

Please, please go save them!

As a reward, they offer 400 gp. In addition, they state there may be some treasure in the Funhouse. There are a lot of strange things in there.

FOOD STANDS

Several carnival-style food stands are located in the town square, in front of the Funhouse. The vendors include:

- Feather candy (cotton candy)
- Sweet dogs (corndogs)
- Sticky corn (caramel corn)
- Candied apples
- Deep fried fruit pies

The vendor stands are mechanical humanoids – metal robots who act once a silver coin is placed in a slot on the stand. Once activated, the metallic creature comes to life, whizzing and whirring, and then hands the delicious treat to the customer.

Each vendor has an AC 18 and 10 hit points. If a vendor is destroyed, it creates a 10-foot radius ball of fire. Each creature in this radius must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 3d6 fire damage, or half damage on a successful save.

THE LIGHTS

Three large animated barrels on the ground near the Funhouse rotate, shining bright, colorful lights into the sky, illuminating the low white clouds above.

REAYER

A Vistani traitor and diviner, Reayer is actually a hag who infiltrated and betrayed a Vistani caravan village to the amvipier, condemning them to live as serpents. They are the Serpent Council. She later met Jack, and, believing he is a true von Zarovich, corrupted him and led him down his path of terror. Jack doesn’t know she is a hag, and if he found out, he would laugh at his own ignorance.

Reayer lives in Area 6 of the Funhouse but works as a busking organ grinder to advertise the Funhouse. She has the magical ability to know the childhood past of anyone she meets, and she freely offers life advice as a sketchy fortune teller would. If Reayer is slain, her **ghost** leaves her corpse and tries to possess the nearest player—if the possession fails once, the ghost disappears (*finally* dead). If she succeeds, she possesses the player, but doesn’t control the body. The player plays as normal, but Reayer sits in the back of the character’s mind and whispers terrible things, tempting the character towards evil.

REAYER, THE ORGAN GRINDER

Reaver the **HAG** and her pet zombie monkey (**BABOON**) continue their performance in front of the Funhouse. Read or summarize the following:

A Vistani crone, covered in rags, cranks an organ grinder while a zombie-looking monkey tumbles and dances near her feet.

An odd-looking mine cart, carved and painted to resemble the head of a dragon, sits on a metal rail behind the organ grinder.

Reaver and the monkey are doing what they love to do, advertising the Funhouse through performance. If the adventurers do or say anything that shows distaste towards the Funhouse, Reaver and the monkey attack, using the magical organ grinder to cast *Evard's black tentacles* to drag the PCs into the mine cart. The organ grinder can cast *Evard's black tentacles* once per day, but it causes the user to age 1d10 years.

SCALING SUGGESTIONS:

CR 3: Use Green Hag

CR 7: Use Night Hag with 130 hit points. Change spell save DC to 15.

CR 10: Use Night Hag. Adjust AC to 19 and hit points to 165. Change spell save DC to 16. Give two claw attacks.

ZOMBIE MONKEY

The zombie monkey, Feebles, is immortal, though it appears to be in a constant state of decay. If slain, it comes back to life in 30 seconds. If separated from Reaver, the zombie monkey selects an adventurer to cling to and follow, preferring a necromancer or bard. Once the adventurer accepts the monkey as friendly, a telepathic-like bond is created between the two, allowing the pair to communicate while within 100 feet of each other; though, speaking to each other requires them to audibly hoot like monkeys.



THE ROLLY COASTY

The Roller Coaster is the entrance to the Funhouse. The cart rests on two short rails, leading nowhere. Once someone sits in the cart and secures the safety harness, the cart begins to move and the rail system magically manifests, extending several hundred feet throughout the town. Loops, barrel rolls, hammerhead turns, corkscrew drops, high-speed curves, and other elements may be experienced on the rollercoaster.

The new rail system leads to the painted, open mouth of the face of Happy Jack. When the cart reaches the mouth, a bright light flashes and the cart and rail system continue into the Funhouse, which is a pocket dimension. The cart then pulls up to a wooden dock, where the riders exit the cart and continue to the waiting room. A door next to the dock reads 'EXIT' and is used to leave through the mouth.

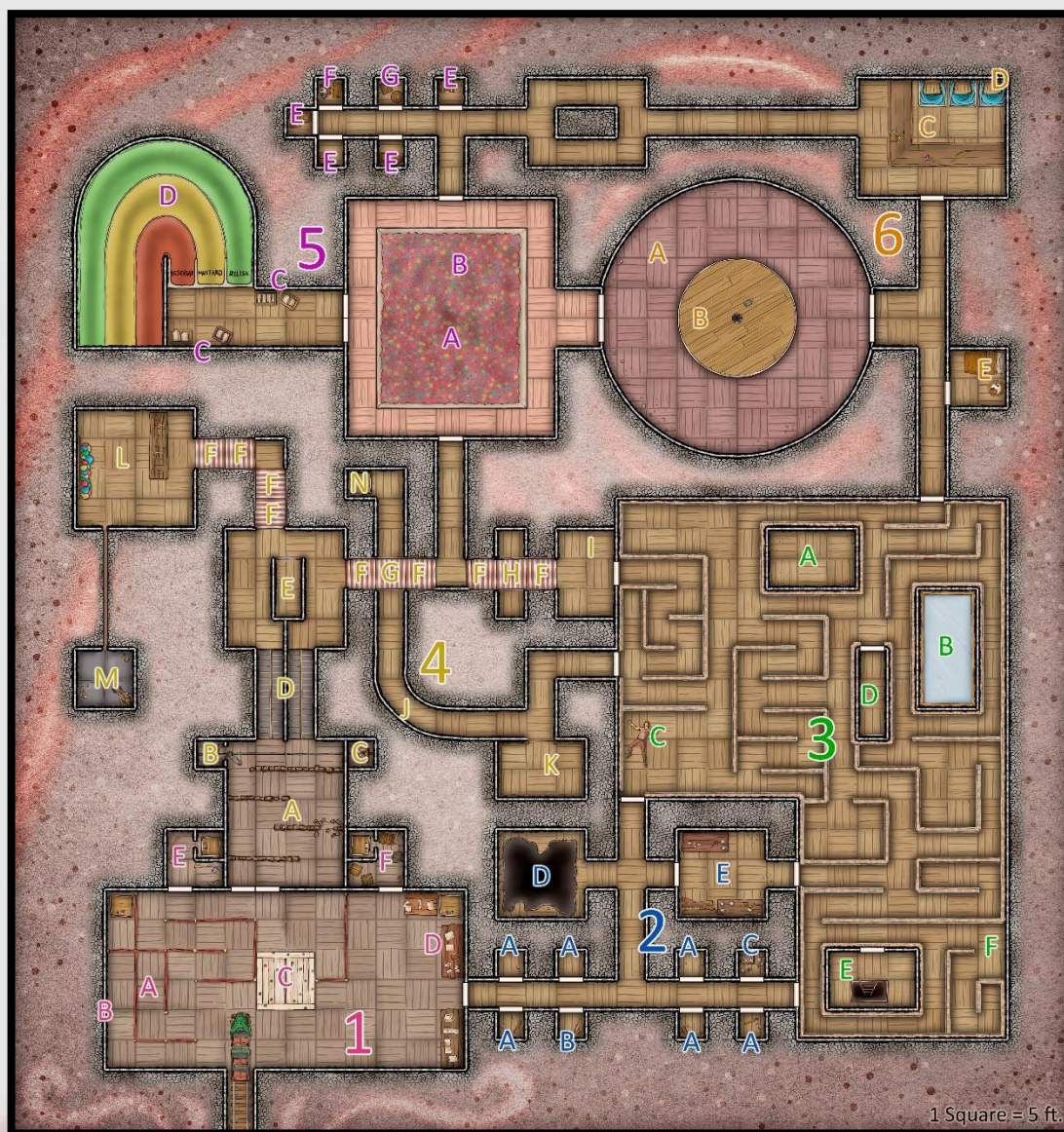
As the adventurers exit the coaster, a character with a Constitution score of 15 or less must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 5 minutes as they battle nausea and dizziness. If the save failed by 5 or more, the character is also incapacitated for 5 minutes as they vomit profusely.

PART 2: THE FUNHOUSE

The Funhouse holds many oddities and rarities which Happy Jack has procured during his life and travels. It is within its own pocket dimension and features an exit to Barovia, where Happy Jack currently entertains the missing children.

TRAPS & TRICKS OF THE FUNHOUSE

The traps and tricks of the funhouse weren't always as devious as they are now. The effects are tied to Jack's emotional state and ideal – which is currently to guard the children he has captured. Some of the effects the adventurers encounter are different than what past customers have encountered. The townsfolk experienced the fun stuff. Sadly, the adventurers won't.





1) WAITING ROOM

APPEARANCE: Dilapidated, abandoned, clusters of old advertisements and fliers, mildew. Happy Jack's face is painted on a sign above the double doors in the north. The locked door (DC 20) on the east wall has a sign with bold text that reads **ONLY HAPPY JACK'S PERSONNEL BEYOND THIS POINT.**

LIGHTING: Low and dim. White, orange, and blue halogen bulbs flicker on the walls. Half are burnt out.

Read or summarize:

The cart pulls up to a wooden dock, allowing you to exit the vehicle onto a platform. Red velvet ropes lead the way to a waiting room. A large white crate, painted with colorful polka dots, rests in the center of the room. Cubbies, dusty and abused by years of guests, sit empty along the west wall.

Two small doors and a large door are found along the north wall. A painting of a clown hangs above the large door, a paper banner dangles from its teeth and reads *'Welcome to the Funhouse'*.

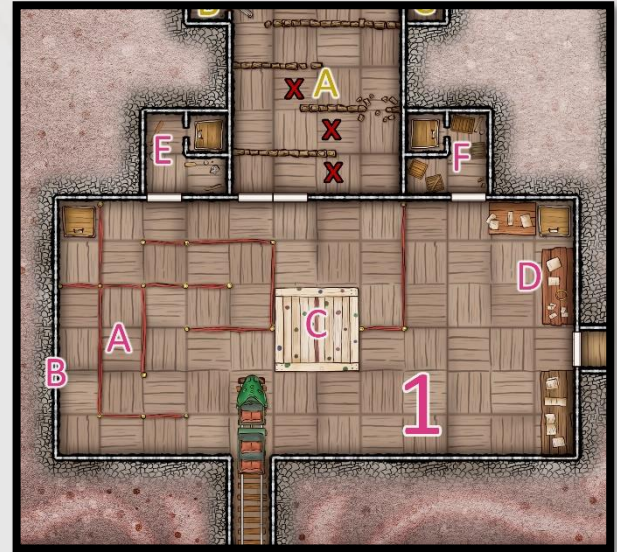
Along the east wall, two wooden tables covered in loose papers are divided by another door with a sign above it reading *Only Happy Jack's Personnel Beyond This Point.*

1A) STANCHIONS

Velvet ropes are set up to direct crowd lines in the west end of the room. The northwest corner has a conduit on the floor that, when opened, reveals a ladder leading down to 7L.

1B) OLD SOUVENIRS

Cubbies for souvenirs abandoned by previous guests. Roll 6 times on the **Random Junk** chart to see what has been left behind.



1C) HIPPO CRATE

A 10-foot-square white wooden box, covered in colored polka dots, sits in the center of the waiting room. Touching it causes it to burst open, revealing Bubby, a **WEREHIPPO**. He's holding a *'WELCOME TO HAPPY JACK'S!'* sign in his mouth, performing simple tricks, and has a nametag that reads *'BUBBY'*.

To read his nametag, PCs must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. On a failed check, Bubby turns and nips at the character, performing a bite attack and potentially infecting the character with werehippo lycanthropy.

He's friendly, but stubborn as hell, and he takes a bite out of someone who tries to harm him. He stays in this room unless led elsewhere, and he prefers to stay in his hippo form. Bubby responds positively to food.

1D) NEW WORKERS

Wooden tables line these walls. Posters and pamphlets advertising the Funhouse's attractions litter the area (see Funhouse Gallery Advertisement). They are listed as follows:

- **Ackshie.** *Survivor and tracker supreme!*
- **Biggs.** *No fish can outswim his cast!*
- **Kova.** *Magician extraordinaire!*
- **Lucy.** *The world's best baker!*
- **Mervinya.** *Classiest and sassiest!*
- **Thallon.** *An explosion of fun!*
- **Xaolixi.** *She'll take your voice away!*
- **Wendrig.** *No truant kids on his watch!*

The northeast corner has a conduit on the floor that, when opened, reveals a ladder leading down to Area 7N.

1E) SUPPLY CLOSET

This area lies dusty, forlorn and empty. A 1-foot diameter hole in the wall leads to a conduit on the floor that, when opened, leads down to area 7E.

1F) SUPPLY CLOSET

Crates and boxes full of blank paper and flyers sit haphazardly throughout this small supply closet. Searching thoroughly reveals **3** items from the **Random Junk** table. A 1-foot diameter hole in the wall leads to a conduit on the floor that, when opened, leads down to area 7O.

FUNHOUSE GALLERY ADVERTISEMENT

Happy Jack took 8 children into his Funhouse. They are physically unharmed and kept in Deep Barovia. However, Jack has the power to pull someone's childhood or adulthood out of them, which manifests as a physical entity—he pulls childhoods out of adults, and he pulls adulthoods out of children.

Jack pulled the adulthood out of the children, which causes the kids to never age, since their adulthoods are no longer a part of them. Their adulthoods, however, have manifested as aggressive characters lurking about the Funhouse. Called **ADULT ASPECTS**, these adulthoods are the imagined form of the children's perceived adulthood—for example, Wendrig wanted to be a teacher, so his adult aspect is a stern man casting spells by scrawling on a blackboard.

Players come into contact with these aspects as they explore—each aspect can be inserted randomly to add flair to an event or danger to an otherwise innocuous location. Will the party find Kova hiding behind a wall, or will they find Mervinya's corpse stashed away? Make certain to review the information in the **Funhouse Gallery** handout before playing. Some DMs may want to pre-populate Jack's Funhouse themselves, others may elect to roll the dice and see what happens...

You can find the **Funhouse Gallery Chart** in the appendix.

2) BACKSTAGE

APPEARANCE: Corridors, closets, and storage bins. These areas are used by the Funhouse employees to get back and forth. No circus decorations are strung up since guests aren't allowed here.

LIGHTING: None whatsoever unless noted.

2A) EMPTY STORAGE

Supply closets sit empty and unused, though scuff marks, shabby, banged up walls, and mysterious dried puddles or liquid trails indicate they may have once been used rather heavily. Upon investigation, there is a 50% chance a character finds an item from the Random Junk table in each closet.

2B) LOST WORKER

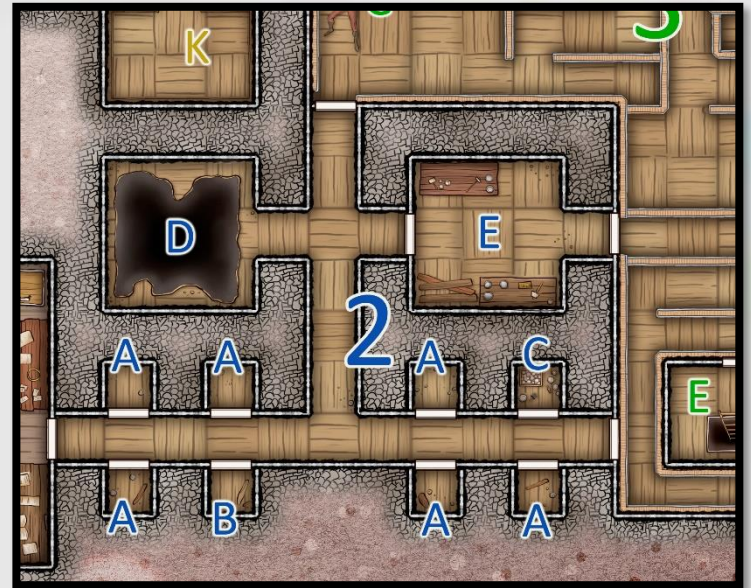
The exhausted and battered form of a sleeping human lies crumpled in the corner of an otherwise completely empty and remarkably small storage closet. Soft snores and fitful moans and cries come from the occupant, who is obviously having some sort of terrible nightmare.

An employee from the Gallery Chart is sleeping in here, waking if the party fail a group DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) saving throw.

Jack (or Reaver) is forcing this Aspect into backbreaking and never-ending labor as an 'employee' of the Funhouse. If awakened, the aspect yells at the party for interfering with their sleep. They are nearly mad from exhaustion and attack the party if not left alone, though they prefer to just go back to sleep.

2C) OLD FIGURES

A box containing 20 uncannily carved wooden, humanoid figurines sits in this closet. Though



the figures are unpainted, each contains such life-like expressions and articulated limbs it's hard to imagine they aren't alive. Paint buckets and paintbrushes of several colors are stacked nearby, all in good condition.

2D) COSTUME CLOSET


A sign lying near the entrance reads 'COSTUMES'. Thread, yarn, and twine of all colors and shapes crisscross the room, creating a thick web of colors.

The floor has been ripped up, exposing a large hole in the center of the room.

The large hole leads down to the **Stitchling's Design Room** (Area 7P).

Creatures navigating this room must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity check or find themselves caught up within the web of string and yarn. A creature caught this way is considered grappled (escape DC 12).

Upon further inspection of the hole, it appears someone or something may have burst through, into, or out of, the room below. Remnants of colorful costumes are scattered



about the corners of the room, most are unraveled, with the threads of the stitching crisscrossing the room, inexpertly covering the gaping hole.

2E) GLASS AND TOOLS

This storage room contains mirror panes, suction cup glass lifters, buckets of glue, hammers, nails, planks, plywood sheets for the Mirror Maze, and 2 Random Junk.

3) MIRROR MAZE

APPEARANCE: Wood walls lined with reflective mirrors. Every wall in this room has a mirror. 10-foot-tall ceiling.

LIGHTING: None unless noted, though light sources work at twice their normal luminosity since light is reflecting off the mirrors. Spells relying on visual distraction (*color spray*) are extremely effective in here (disadvantage on saves against them).

MIRRORS: All doors in this room have mirrors on the side facing into the room. Ranged attacks that do radiant damage can be reflected off the mirrors like a laser.

- o Mirrors in the **blue** areas distort what they reflect to look bigger (people's reflections look fat). A radiant spell reflecting off this surface deals half as much damage as it expands.
- o Mirrors in the **red** areas distort what they reflect to look smaller (people's reflections look skinny). A radiant spell reflecting off this surface deal twice as much damage as it is focused into a beam.

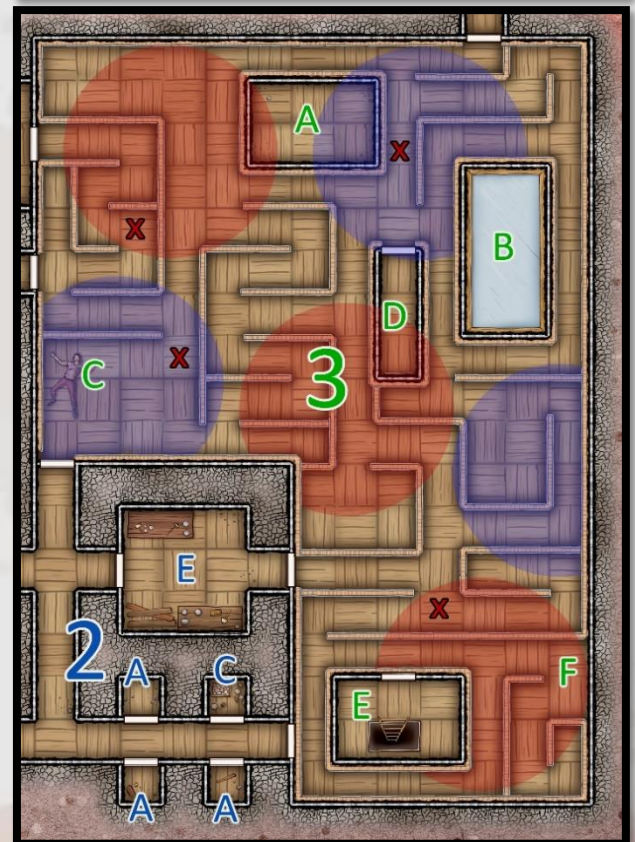
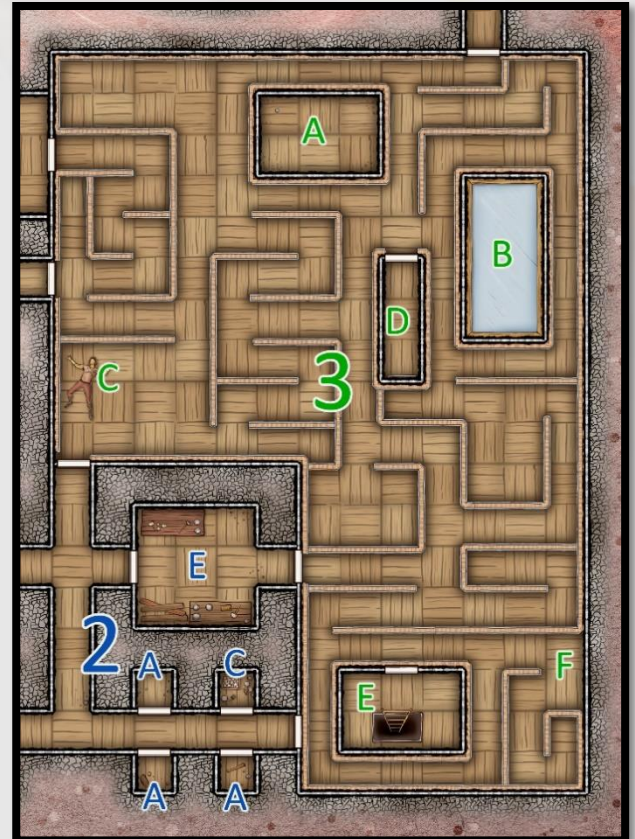
TRAPS: Areas with a **red X** are traps, requiring a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. Deactivating the traps requires a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The trap is activated by a creature stepping on the tile, which releases a *polymorph* spell stored within the mirror. A creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be *polymorphed* to resemble their distorted reflection. The effect lasts for one hour but the creature retains all of its other statistics and characteristics.

Each trap has only one charge, which recharges at the next dawn.

3A) TRAPPED MONSTER

This walled wooden room is lined with mirrors on the outside and has no entrance or exit; however, someone lurks inside. Roll on the



Funhouse Gallery Chart to determine who is inside. The occupant will take 1d4 minutes breaking the walls down to attack the PCs, should they attract its attention somehow. Roll 3 times on the **Random Junk** chart to see what else is in here.

3B) MIRRORED FLOOR

200 lbs. or more of pressure on this mirrored floor causes it to shatter, and anyone standing on it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall to Area 7K. Grystakk can hear and speak to people close to this area (see area 7K).

3C) DEAD VILLAIN

An unmoving human corpse lies on the ground. Next to it is a unique-looking long metal wand with a wooden handle and a leather shoulder strap. Fastened to the shoulder strap are six small red tubes with copper caps.

An aspect from the **Funhouse Gallery Chart** turned to villainy and has been slain. Its corpse is here, lying next to it is a **boomgun** with 6 pieces of ammunition. The boomgun is a primitive shotgun.

BOOMGUN

Martial Ranged Weapon, loading
Weight: 8 lbs.
Range: 5/120

Proficiency with martial ranged weapons allows you to successfully use the boomgun.

The boomgun fires a ball of magical energy which hits a target of your choice that you can see within range. A ball deals 10 (3d4 + 3) force damage to its target. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 10 feet.

The boomgun has the loading property and must be reloaded using an action after firing one piece of ammunition.

3D) TASHA'S KISS' CLOSET

The outside of the closet's wooden walls are covered in mirrors. Inside stands a 4-foot-tall mirror, covered in a tarp. This mirror acts as a portal to one of Jack's friends – a jester known as Tasha's Kiss.

DM's NOTE:

If you have *The Madhouse of Tasha's Kiss* adventure, adventurers can step through this pane like a portal and exit from The Mirror in Area 7 of *The Madhouse of Tasha's Kiss*. They can step back through it.

3E) LADDER BELOW

A door hidden behind the mirrors reveals a hole in the floor with a ladder leading down to Area 7R. Roll twice on the **Random Junk** chart to see what else is stored in this room.



3F) ADVERTISEMENT POSTER

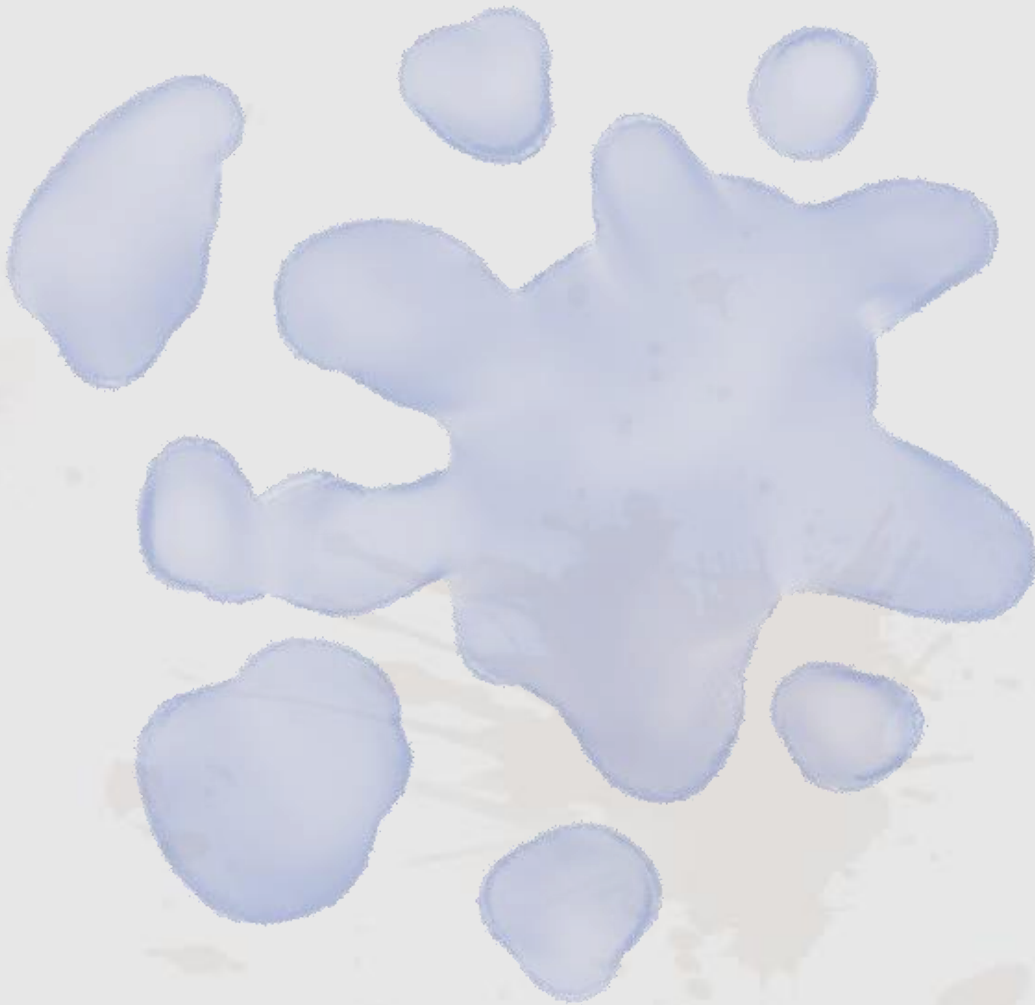
A poster advertising Happy Jack's Funhouse adorns this mirrorless segment of wall. A white-faced clown with fiery red hair and piercing blue eyes grins happily.

The poster comes to life and speaks to the party, taunting them. The animated face has

the personality of a hyper-depressed clown forced to be happy, and extremely unstable mannerisms. The disembodied clown claims:

- *I needs the kids so I can stay happy.*
- *I NEED TO BE HAPPY!*
- *You can't take them from me!*
- *Play with the grownups I made for you!*

Happy Jack's Poster comes to life if goaded, attacking the adventurers.



4) STAIRS & SCARES

APPEARANCE: Wooden walls painted with zany, wacky carnival nonsense – jumping unicorns, hippopotamuses, metal constructs, candy, and balloons.

LIGHTING: Carnival lights, half of them burnt out, of several colors. They flash, giving off dim light. The few lights that work are caked with grime and dust.

4A) WRAPAROUND ROOM

As the adventurers enter this area, read or summarize:

The phrase ‘*Happy Jack Loves You!*’ and images of screaming and laughing demons and devils are painted on the walls of this area.

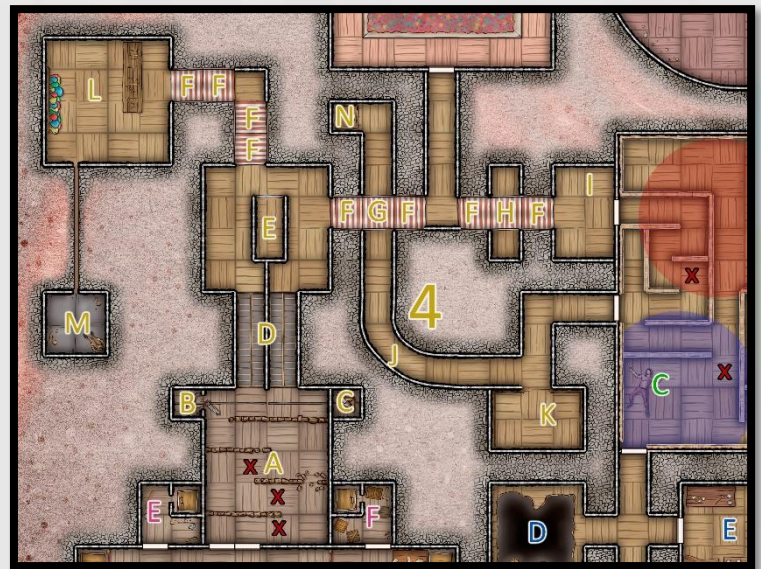
The walls are constructed using loose blocks of pressed wood, crumbling if they are pushed too hard.

TRAPS

Certain areas of the floor are trapped, requiring a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. A successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools is required to deactivate the trap.

If stepped on, the trap releases a puff of gas from above the creature’s head, affecting only that creature. Choose from one of the below or roll 1d4:

- The creature suffers the effects of the *confusion* spell for 1 minute.
- The creature suffers the effects of the *phantasmal force* spell for 1 minute, screaming in terror as it witnesses a giant clown, who is trying to step on them with its giant, red floppy shoes, chasing them through a land made of candy canes, gum drops, and caramel lakes.



- The creature suffers the effects of the *crown of madness* spell – seeing all of their fellow adventurers changed into clowns with razor-sharp, bloody teeth.
- The creature suffers the effects of the *dissonant whispers* spell – hearing the haunting music of an organ grinder and the maniacal hooting of a monkey. If a creature suffers this effect, hearing either of these sounds again terrifies them. The creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or suffer from **short-term madness** for 1 minute.

Each trap has one charge, which recharges at dawn.

4B) BROKEN CHAINSAW CONSTRUCT

As the adventurers approach this area, read or summarize:

A metallic, human-sized construct lays on the floor, holding an odd metal contraption in its hand.

A collapsed, non-functional, metal-framed, construct has fallen face first through this wall, breaking and twisting the odd weapon in its hands. A metal track in the room indicates the construct was meant to burst through the fake wall and scare guests with the chainsaw.

TREASURE

1 liter of gasoline can be syphoned or poured from the broken chainsaw, and 100 sp worth of scrap silver can be pulled from the construct.

4C) WORKING CHAINSAW

CONSTRUCT

Standing in front of 4D) *Switchback Stairs* activates the Chainsaw Construct. The construct bursts through a fake wall and charges 15 feet westward while waving about a functioning chainsaw, which starts when the construct is activated. Each creature in this 15-foot line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature suffers 3d6 slashing damage on a failed save, or no damage on a successful one.

TREASURE

If the adventurers destroy the construct, it can be looted for 1 liter of gasoline and 100 sp worth of scrap silver. It also has a working **Chainsaw**. A creature succeeding on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check learns how to start and operate the chainsaw

CHAINSAW

Martial Melee Weapon

Weight: 8 lbs.

Proficiency with martial melee weapons allows you to add your proficiency bonus to the attack roll for any attack you make with a chainsaw.

It takes 1 round to activate a chainsaw and it uses 1 liter of gasoline per hour it is activated. It deals 3d6 slashing damage on melee attacks, but no modifiers are applied to damage rolls.

On a successful hit, the chain blade gets caught up in armor, clothing, flesh, and bone and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Melee attacks have advantage against targets grappled this way.

4D) SWITCHBACK LADDERS

A bizarre contraption lies across an open pit – four ladders, each 2 ½ feet wide and divided by a wall in the middle, shake and move in opposite directions.

Four 2.5-foot-wide by 15-foot-long ladders, divided by a wall in the middle, lay flat across an open 5-foot-deep pit. Each ladder moves, rotating back and forth and in opposite directions, making them difficult terrain. Anyone trying to cross the ladders at normal speed must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone, suffering 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A prone creature attempting to stand must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone again.

Standing in front of the ladders activates the Working Chainsaw Construct (See Area 4C).



4E) THE PEDDLER

A whirring noise and a soft voice are heard from behind the walls in the center of the room.

A character from the **Funhouse Gallery Chart** sits on a stationary bike in this enclosed area, brainwashed by Happy Jack to “just keep on peddling, yep, that’s what I do, THAT’S WHAT I LOVE TO DO!”

A 5-foot-square glass door in the north end allows people to see inside and enter. The peddler attacks if the adventurers do anything to stop it from peddling (even only suggesting they stop). The peddling produces electricity, and if the peddling stops, the following happens:

- All lights in **Area 1** and **Area 4** go out.
- The trap in **4C** ceases to function.
- The rotating switchback stairs in **4D** stop rotating.
- The tunnels in **4E** stop rotating.
- The tunnels in **4F** and **4G** stop rotating and immediately roll down their ramps (subsequently freeing the amviper and the other Funhouse Gallery member).

4F) ROTATING TUNNEL

This six-foot diameter circular tunnel spins one full rotation every 6 seconds. A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross the tunnel without falling prone. On a failed check, a creature begins rolling around inside, suffering 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage.

A prone creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stand or exit the rotating tunnel. On a failure, they continue to roll around in the tunnel, suffering 1d4 bludgeoning damage on each failure.

4G) AMVIPER TUNNEL

This six-foot diameter circular tunnel spins one full rotation every 6 seconds. A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross this tunnel without falling prone.

Falling prone in this tunnel causes it to detach from its holdings and roll southwards, spinning anyone inside for 1d4 bludgeoning damage. It comes to a stop near Area 4K, slamming into the button nearby and releasing the Amviper.

4H) GALLERY TUNNEL

This six-foot diameter circular tunnel spins one full rotation every 6 seconds. A successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross this tunnel without falling prone.

Falling prone in this tunnel causes it to detach from its holdings and roll northward, stopping after only 5 feet of movement. South of this tunnel is 1 **Random Junk** and someone from the **Funhouse Gallery Chart**, who is now freed and antagonistic towards anyone it sees.

4I) MIRROR MAZE ENTRANCE

A door, covered in sharp, broken shards of glass somehow glued to the wood, is flanked by a brilliantly lit neon orange sign, reading ‘WALLS OF GLASS’.

A smaller, discolored and crumpled paper sign is taped to the wall nearby above a rubbish bin.

A character approaching the door sees their reflection, fragmented, broken, and pale from the fluorescent light.

The smaller, discolored crumpled paper sign above a rubbish bin reads ‘No Drinks Allowed!’ If characters inspect the waste bin, roll twice on the **Random Junk** table to see what is inside.



4J) ROLLAWAY PATH

A 5-degree incline tunnel meant for the Amvipper Tunnel (4G) to roll down. Higher end is near 4G, lower end is near 4K.

4K) AMVIPER PEN

The interior of the room is surrounded with mirrors, including the floors and ceiling. The air inside is humid and damp, with a musky, animalistic scent. A segment near the north end is a two-way viewing mirror that's transparent to people looking into the pen. Inside the mirror lies the **AMVIPER**.

BUTTON

Pressing a nearby button causes the two-way viewing mirror to slide up, allowing access to the interior. If the Rollaway Tunnel (4G) is triggered, it inadvertently presses this button when it stops rolling, releasing the amvipper, who then escapes and travels to Area 4I: Mirror Maze.

As the adventurers near this room, read or summarize:

A 5-foot-tall by 5-foot-wide window is set in the middle of the wall. Condensation covers the other side of the window, allowing for only a hazy view of a completely mirrored room. A distorted and unrecognizable humanoid figure, concealed by the hazed view, moves within.

If the Rollaway Tunnel (4G) was activated, the barrel pressed the button, lowering the glass window. Pressing the button again raises the two-way mirror.

Read or summarize:

A large barrel, like the rolling tunnels you encountered earlier, rests in front of a 5-foot-tall by 5-foot-wide opening set in the middle of the wall, revealing a completely mirrored room. A few pieces of debris are scattered about the floor, along with another small mirror.

AMVIPER

A snake-like monster, once human, now a victim of Reaver after she had the Stitchling make "something like the Devil Strahd, but snakey!" Her twisted mind has one purpose – to rid the world of anything joyful. This goes against Jack's personal beliefs, so he's placed her in this room. She's a fantastic specimen to view but she isn't a great interactive Funhouse attraction.

A creation of the Stitchling, the amvipper recalls very little of her past. Only her original name, Herva, and a few memories of living happily in a small village float in her maddened mind. If the adventurers are lucky enough to speak with her, they may learn this and may wish to help. Herva explains that destroying her creator, a monstrous creature located in the lower level (Stitchling: Area 7P) releases her from her co-mingled form, separating Herva and the giant constrictor snake she shares a body with. If this occurs, the giant constrictor snake attacks the party. Herva's memories flood back and she recalls her history and the day she was abducted by an old hag-like creature. Herva's village isn't very far away and she offers to cook the party a tasty meal and allow them some relaxation time.

The **AMVIPER** feels most comfortable surrounded by mirrors since she has no reflection—she can sneak up on prey easier (and see their reflections). She prefers to attack for one or two rounds, then flee, returning to attack later. If freed, she prefers to lurk in the Mirror Room (Area 3) and ambush her next meal. She can also shapeshift into a swarm of poisonous snakes and lurk in the conduits. She fears the Serpent Council, which is Reaver's former caravan.

4L) BALLOON POP

The west wall is covered in various balloons of different colors (8 red, 8 blue, 8 green, 8 yellow). A wooden table has 32 darts lying on it. The balloons have an AC 10 and one hit point. If a balloon is popped with a dart, the following effects take place, depending on the color of balloon:

- **RED:** Blood seeps from the attacker's eyes, dealing 1d4 necrotic damage. If a balloon is burst, Jack's voice echoes, "I only put the sad ones in the 'Grown-Up Room'" and the 1-inch tunnel to the Grown-Up Room (4M) expands to 5 feet in diameter for 1 minute before shrinking back.
- **BLUE:** 1 **Random Junk** falls out.
- **GREEN:** If she is still alive, the amvipier (Area 4K) takes 1d6 necrotic damage. Her painful screams are heard echoing throughout the Funhouse.
- **YELLOW:** A note falls out, each titled 'What I'm Happy For...' These are written in childish scribbles and signed by the children Jack holds in his secret place.

YELLOW BALLOON NOTES	
1	<i>I can stay outside and play in the dirt forever! I never have to put on my nice clothes or wash behind my ears again! Ackshie</i>
2	<i>Fishing all day. I'll get the big one—then a bigger one! Briggs</i>
3	<i>Abra-cadaboeth! Yeah! A new magician is in town! Kova</i>
4	<i>They'll know that I can bake! I'll feed the village! Lucy</i>
5	<i>Just to be pretty... to have food...to have money. I don't have to starve again. Mervinya</i>
6	<i>BIG GUN BIG PIRATE BULLET YEAH WOOWOO KABOOM! Thallon</i>
7	<i>So many will listen. So many will sit and listen for once. Wenrig</i>
8	<i>A book, a library, a world of reading. Peace... and quiet... Xaolixi</i>

4M) GROWN-UP ROOM

A 1-inch diameter tunnel (large enough for a Tiny creature to fit through) from the Balloon Pop room leads into a room made completely of ancient black stone that radiates hellish magic. This room can be accessed by popping a red balloon in the Balloon Pop room. A creature standing in this at the end of its turn must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or age 1 year.

Effects include:

- Rapid beard and hair balding, greying, or growth of 6 inches per year.
- Rapid fingernail and toenail growth up to 1 inch long per year, which causes difficulty handling weapons and painful walking until trimmed.
- Rapid weight-loss up to 10 lbs. per year.

The withered corpse of someone from the **Funhouse Gallery Chart** lies in the corner. Three **Random Junk** items are found on the body.

4N) TUNNEL CONDUIT (UPPER)

A floor hatch opens to a ladder leading down to area 7E.

5) KID'S ZONE

APPEARANCE: Colorful murals of kids playing games and having fun cover the walls. Various painted phrases:

I never want to leave!
At Happy Jack's! Why go home?
The best fun in all of Barovia!
Can I be a clown when I grow up?
Let's stay forever!

LIGHTING: Halogen bulbs described as tiny orbs of light screwed into the wall. Over-the-top, flashing, like a kids' cartoon cranked to a nightmare maximum. Almost blinding strobes.

5A) BALL PIT

A 5-foot-wide path surrounds a large pit filled with blue, yellow, green, and red balls the size of apples. A soft boom is heard, originating from under the balls. Then, something moves, causing the balls to shuffle about.

A 10-foot-deep pit, filled with 3,000 multicolored balls made from an odd material (plastic), takes up nearly the entire room. The walls of the pit are slick, as though *grease* were cast on them. If the balls are thrown about with any force, they pop, dealing 1 point of fire damage to whatever they hit. If characters play in the ball pit, they should make ranged attack rolls at whatever they are throwing at.

A lost pig named **Oinkfat** is at the bottom of the pit, eating the plastic balls. The balls explode in his belly, but they don't hurt him because he is immortal. He got lost from Area 7K: Petting Zoo, but he seems to like it here better.

5B) PIT PLUG

A four-foot diameter plug that, if removed, causes the balls to drain from the pit and end



up on Area 6B: Dais. Oinkfat also falls through this pipe, with a loud and terrified squeal.

5C) BLANKET CRATES

Five crates contain scrap-made blankets, sewn from discarded and lost-and-found children's clothes, which are meant to sit on while going down the slide.

5D) FUN SLIDE

A multicolored slide built for racing leads down into the darkness. A red lane, with the word '*Ketchup*' painted in big block letters with a childish hand is on the far left, with a yellow '*Mustard*' lane in the middle, and of course, green '*Relish*' to the right.

While sliding down, an adventurer hears cheering, laughing, and clapping for their color or condiment and emerges into area 7C of the Undervents.

5E) STORAGE ROOMS

These closets are filled with spare orbs of light, bright carnival clothes, paint, ladders, hammers, nails, and glue.

5F) HAPPY JACK MASCOT

A medium-sized mascot suit of Jack, complete with giant clown shoes, foam hands, and a massive papier-mâché sculpt of Jack's smiling head is on display in this room.

Wearing the costume grants advantage on checks to disguise as one of Jack's employees; it also scares adults and delights most children.

CHARACTERS AND THE COSTUME

If a creature suffered the effect of the *phantasmal force* spell in Area 4A, they must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature suffers **short-term madness** for 1d10 minutes as it recalls the horrors of the giant clown who was trying to step on them.

If a creature suffered the effect of the *crown of madness* spell in Area 4A, they must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they feel compelled to attack the costume for 1d4 minutes.

5G) STORAGE ROOM CONDUIT

These closets are filled with spare glass blubs, bright carnival clothes, paint, ladders, hammers, nails, and glue. A creature succeeding on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a conduit hatch and ladder leading to Area 7A hidden under the supplies.

6) REAVER'S RISE

APPEARANCE: Walls bedecked with paintings of a Vistani crone.

LIGHTING: Low purple light emanating from ceiling-mounted glass driftglobes in every room. These lights act as ultraviolet blacklights, revealing fluid stains on the adventurers and within the room. A creature recently splattered with blood lights up in glowing white patches and splotches.

6A) PLANAR VORTEX

This wheel-shaped room is 40-foot-wide. Four purple globes hang near the 15-foot-tall ceiling, their purplish lights creating glowing white splotches on your armor and clothing.

A 10-foot-tall cylindrical wooden platform stands in the middle of the room. The walls are covered in glowing neon paintings of the astral universe and glowing footprints, both child and adult sized.

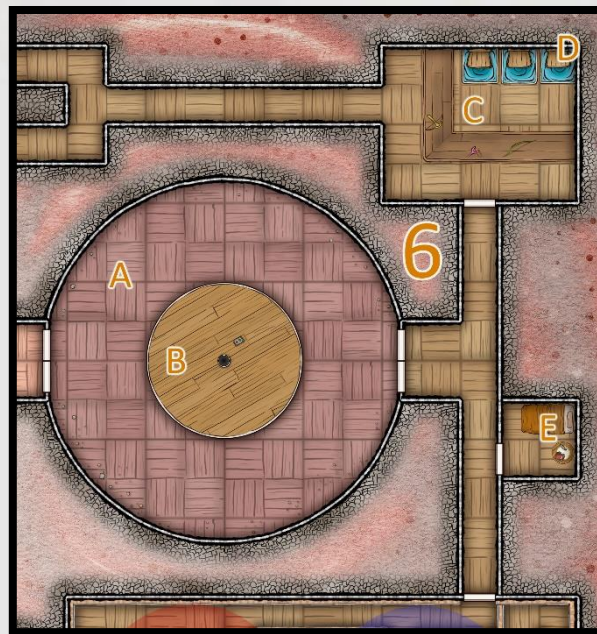
The blacklight driftglobes cause the colors of the paintings to glow and pop. The light also reveals glowing footprints which were created by past guests.

6B) DAIS

A 10-foot-tall, raised cylindrical wooden platform. A member of the **Funhouse Gallery Chart** (or Reaver) sits in the center. If Reaver escaped at the beginning of the adventure, she is found here instead of the Funhouse Gallery member.

DAIS SHIELD

Due to the chaotic nature of the room and the tendency of children to be holding sticky sweets, hot treats, or a smuggled ball from the ball pit, the dais operator can activate a *shield*



spell three times per day while standing on the dais.

OPERATING THE PLANAR VORTEX

A switch on the dais turns on the Planar Vortex, causing the wheel-shaped room to quickly spin. The dais is fixed to the floor and isn't affected by the spinning. Gravitational force throws anyone in the Planar Vortex towards the walls, slowly increasing in force per round:

PLANAR VORTEX EFFECTS BE ROUND

1. Strength save DC 5 or fall prone.
2. Strength save DC 10 or fall prone.
3. Strength save DC 15 or fall prone, pressed against the wall.
4. Gravity allows people to stand on the wall.
5. Unsecured objects and projectiles are flung towards the wall.
6. Walking on the wall is possible, but it is difficult terrain.

BALL PIT PLUG

When approached, the Funhouse Gallery aspect (or Reaver) hits a button on the dais to pop open the plug in Area 5B: Ball Pit, causing the balls and Oinkfat to launch up through a 3-foot hole in the center of the dais (100 balls per

round). By the 5th round of the Planar Vortex's activation, gravity flings the balls outward at anyone along the walls. Each round, up to three balls may come into contact with a character, forcing them to make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, 1d6 balls (and maybe a pig) hit them and explode, dealing 1 fire damage and 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage from the force of the throw. Oinkfat is *frightened* of everyone in the room and squeals in terror as he is tossed about. If a character rolls a 1 on their Dexterity save, Oinkfat slams into them, dealing 8 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and leaving a trail of snot and pig drool on their clothes or armor, which then glows due to the blacklights.

6C) DUNKING BOOTH

Three chairs, with archery targets next to each, rest above three 5-foot-wide and 5-foot-deep basins along the north wall. A wooden countertop separates the room from the chairs and basins. On the counter are a lime green shortbow, a pink sling, and a yellow light crossbow. Additionally, 14 pieces of ammunition are present for each weapon. Among the ammunition are 2 jet-black arrows, stones, and bolts.

A sign above the chairs reads '*Be Young Again! Play in the Water!*'

A wooden countertop separates the chairs from the rest of the room. When the targets are hit, they dump whoever is in the chair into the basin. The left two chairs are empty, but hitting their targets causes the floor to drop out and reveals ladders down to Area 7B.

BOWS & AMMO & TARGETS

The lime-green shortbow and pink sling are *magical +1* items.

The black ammunition radiates conjuration magic (teleportation) if detected for magic. If a

black shot is fired at a target, it deals no damage to the target. Instead, it teleports the user into one of the chairs.

The targets are magically tuned to the weapons, reducing the probability of a miss and effectively giving the targets an AC of 5.

FLIM-FLAM AMMUNITION

Weapon, very rare

Flim-Flam ammunition deals no damage. Instead, on impact, it creates a puff of brimstone and teleports the user to an empty space within 5 feet of the ammunition's point of impact. On a failed attack roll, the user is teleported to wherever the ammunition lands.

Once the teleportation property is used, the piece of ammunition becomes nonmagical.

6D) BASIN OF YOUTH

Strapped in a chair over the right most basin is a member of the Funhouse Gallery Chart, but ancient and withered—appearing dead. Close inspection reveals this person isn't dead, but extremely old and haggard - aged by the Grown-Up Room (4M).

YOUTH TONIC

This basin is filled with a magical, sparkly, clear liquid. Any living creature that touches the liquid must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or age in reverse at a rate of 2 years per round. Removing itself from the water ends the aging. Water removed from the basin causes it to lose its magic. Members of the Funhouse Gallery have no childhood and thus stop de-aging before they reach adolescence.

CHARACTERS AS CHILDREN

To keep things simple, if players are reduced to children, apply disadvantage to any rolls they would make on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability saving throws using their Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution scores. Some of them

may be too small for their armor to fit or too weak to lift heavy weapons.

6E) REAVER'S ROOM

*A sign above the door reads 'Reaver's Room.
Also, this door is hexed!'*

The door isn't hexed. Inside is a single tattered bedroll and a small nightstand holding a piece of sharpened charcoal and a leather-bound journal. The whole room stinks of sewage and tobacco. Inside the bedroll is a *Serpent Figurine*.

SERPENT FIGURINE

Wondrous Item, rare

A rare trinket created by the Stitchling. Possession of this figure prevents any form of aging, reverse or forward. Reaver sleeps with it because "Eighty is the best decade I've experienced in a hundred years!"

REAVER'S JOURNAL

Reaver has kept a journal since she learned Jack's last name is von Zarovich. She believes Jack is a descendant of Strahd von Zarovich, but he's not. Or is he?

Only a few pages of the journal are legible. The rest are smeared with charcoal. They read:

- *Poor Jacky is so sad. Haha!*
- *Taught Jacky a few dark spells today. He's very talented.*
- *My plan is working. The more he learns, the more his mind twists. It won't be long.*
- *Soon! He'll break soon! Then his bloodline's power will be released.*

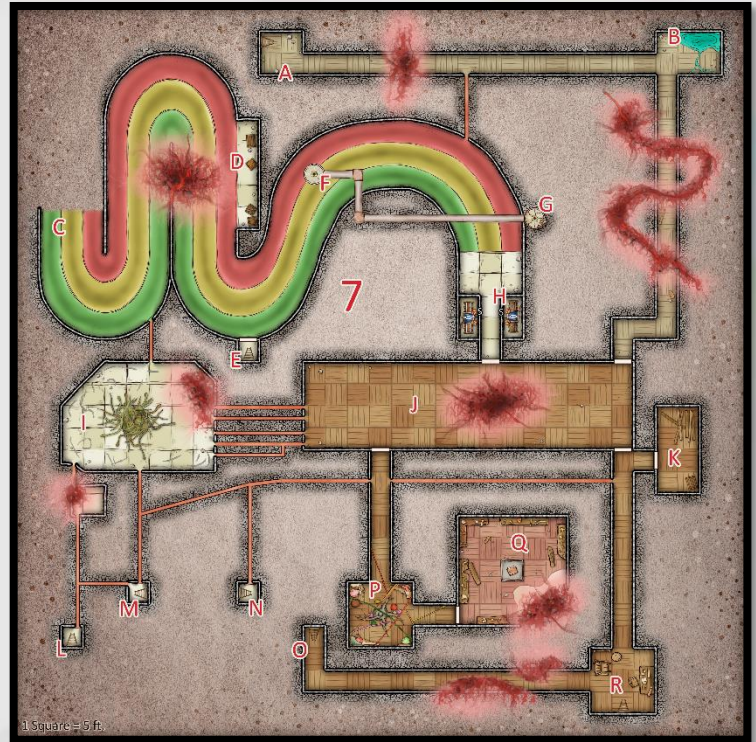
7) THE UNDERVENTS

APPEARANCE: Unpainted wooden tunnels and halls along a basement floor of the Funhouse. Grimy and dirty.

LIGHTING: None, unless noted.

PLANAR SORES: The planar ties waver down here, and empty patches of black ethereal nothingness spread across areas of the floor. If anyone steps into these black patches, they fall through and are spat out within 5 feet of a different planar sore (determined randomly) and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. Represented by red blobs on the map for Area 7.

PIPELINES: Several 5-inch diameter conduit pipelines connect the rooms. Only Tiny-sized creatures can fit inside. They are mostly used by the snakes of the Serpent Council.



7A) KID ZONE CONDUIT

A ladder leads up to a hatch to Area 5G.

7B) SALLIE AND THE DUNKING BOOTH

This room collects the runoff from the Dunking Booth.

A sobbing girl, wearing a blue dress with a nametag sticker that reads 'SALLIE', roams this tunnel, avoiding the planar sores by joyfully jumping and skipping over them. She was with Jack and the other children, but Jack booted her back to the Funhouse because she wasn't very happy or very fun. She wants to get out and demands the adventurers help her. She can also lead them to Area 7R: Jack's Room, where she and the other children entered a funny, spiral portal.

ROLEPLAYING SALLIE (Sail-E)

Sallie is a brazen, crass, and spoiled 10-year old girl who sometimes uses inappropriate language. She doesn't introduce herself. Instead, she points at her nametag. If her name is mispronounced as Sally, she quickly corrects the person, stating, "No! It's Sail-E."

She's a nuisance and a pest. It's no wonder Jack kicked her back to the Funhouse.

7C) LOWER FUN SLIDE

The Fun Slide in Area 5D continues beneath the main floor. The incline travels west to east and ends north of Area 7H. Anyone using the slide risks sliding into the **planar sore** that has grown in the middle of the slide. Avoiding it requires a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check. Certain lanes are safer than others (see map).

7D) SLIDE STOP

A 5-foot by 25-foot 'pit-stop' of the fun slide that has no incline. Players may leap to this side when making checks to avoid the planar sore. This room also contains four boxes, each full of burlap sacks, nails, hammers, old boards, and 1 **Random Junk** item.

7E) TUNNEL CONDUIT (LOWER)

A ladder leads up to a hatch to Area 4N.

7F) BALL PIT DRAIN

If the Pit Plug from Area 5B is removed, the balls flow through this 3-foot-wide pipe towards Area 7G. The pipe travels over the fun slide. People passing beneath the slide can see the pipe hanging from the ceiling.

SECOND BALL PIT PLUG

A second plug rests on the bottom of this pipe. If removed, the balls (and pig) spill onto the slide and roll down to the generators at Area 7H instead of the launcher at Area 7G. When the balls pile up near the generators, they explode (see 7H: Destroying the Generators).

7G) BALL PIT LAUNCHER

If the Planar Vortex (Area 6A) is activated, any balls (and pig) draining from the ball pit end up here and are launched up to Area 6B: Dais for the Gallery Member to use as weapons.

7H) VORTEX GENERATORS

Four magical generators hidden behind the walls give off a low humming noise. They provide electricity for the Planar Vortex (6A). They can't be moved without being destroyed. The generators have an AC 10 and 10 hit points. A creature succeeding on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the secret doors used to access the generators.

DESTROYING THE GENERATORS

Whether by PC attacks, collateral damage, or the ball pit balls exploding near the area (see Second Plug at Area 7F), if a generator is destroyed, it creates a ball of electricity, damaging anything within a 20-foot radius. A creature in this radius must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 6d6 lightning damage, or half damage on a successful save.

Destroying one generator sets off a chain reaction to any other generators nearby (each explodes 1 round later). When all four are destroyed, they generate enough damage to obliterate Areas 6A, 6B, 7G, and 7H, tearing a portal in the planar dimension that leads to Deep Barovia (if Oinkfat the pig ends up here, he's okay—he's immortal!—He'll find his way to Deep Barovia, where he'll seek out the nearest patch of truffles for a nice, non-explosive meal).

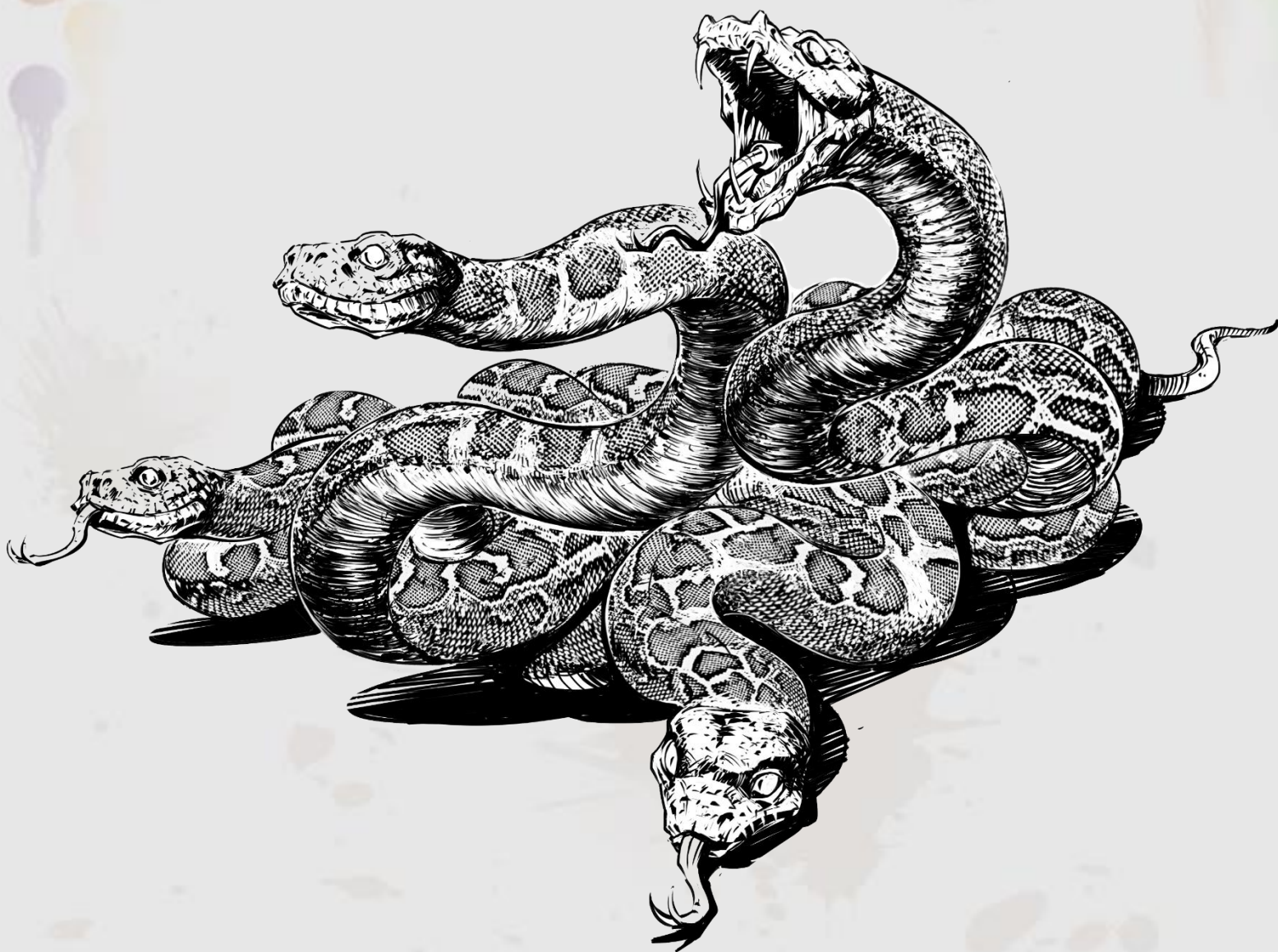
7I) SERPENT COUNCIL CHAMBER

This room can only be accessed by Tiny or smaller creatures. If entered, read or summarize:

This dimly lit room is filled with an incessant hiss and the smell of musk. A writhing mass in the center, a large ball of snakes, moves and undulates like a heartbeat. Hundreds of tiny eyes glitter in the dim light.

A small crack in the 30-foot-tall ceiling allows light to slip through. The open areas of the floor are covered in crunchy skins shed from snakes. Conduit pipelines jut from several directions, and a massive pile of 20 **swarms of poisonous snakes** rests in the center of the room.

If the amvipser is destroyed, the swarms of poisonous vipers are instead replaced by hundreds of dead human bodies packed so tightly in the room that blood pours from the conduit pipelines into adjacent rooms.



SERPENT COUNCIL

When the amvipser bites victims, they become piles of poisonous snakes. Over the years, several of these viper swarms have collected into a writhing ball hidden beneath the planar Funhouse. They are the Serpent Council—a hivemind with multiple memories of multiple lives. They want the amvipser dead, but know that if she dies, they will revert into humanoid form and be crushed by the sudden transformation within the confined area. Most of them are Vistani from the caravan that Reaver infiltrated.

JOINING. Any character transformed into a swarm of poisonous snakes by the amvipser may join the Snake Council by slithering into the pile, receiving an influx of hundreds of memories—all victims of the amvipser. Characters may leave once joined, but their outlook on life is changed and the memories of countless others follow them forever.

FREEDOM. They want the amvipser dead, but know that if she dies, they will revert into humanoid form and be crushed by the sudden transformation within the confined areas. They need to be spread out or freed from the Funhouse before the amvipser is slain. (20d10 + 100 humanoid **commoners** in total make up the council). If freed and returned to humanoid form, they stay together - forming a commune somewhere, possibly asking the adventurers for help establishing a new village and community, with a Vistani flair, built on “the greater good.”

KNOWLEDGE. Adventurers can find knowledge on many things by conversing with the Serpent Council. They know Jack’s history, Reaver’s schemes, and that the Funhouse Gallery members are constructed aspects created by Jack from children he has captured.

7J) CAUSEWAY

An open, empty floor with a large planar sore in the center. This is the central hub of the undervents.

7K) PETTING ZOO

A large sign above the door reads ‘Petting Zoo’.

The petting zoo hasn’t been used for quite a while. It was too tedious to set up and maintain. The room is a now storage unit for the old fence posts and rusty barbed wire. Several old, beat up signs lay on the floor:

Bubby the Human Hippo
Oinkfat the Immortal Pig
Grystakk the Terrible

GRYSTAKK’S LAIR

A 10-foot-square mirror on the ceiling contains the reflected spirit of Grystakk, the miniature **Young Green Dragon** who used to be in the petting zoo. The dragon was placed here by the Stitchling on Reaver’s orders. He wants to be destroyed, allowing him, finally, to die. This can be done by breaking the mirror. If another mirror is pressed against his, he can jump into the new mirror. If the adventurers press the mirror to Tasha’s Kiss’ realm (Area 3D) up against Grystakk’s mirror, he can hop to Tasha’s Kiss’ world and manifest as a miniature young green dragon.

GRYSTAKK

A miniature young green dragon has the same statistics as a young green dragon but is only half the size, making Grystakk a Medium-sized creature.

7L) WAITING ROOM CONDUIT 1

A ladder leads to a hatch to the conduit in the northwestern most corner of Area 1A.

7M) WAITING ROOM CONDUIT 2

A ladder leads to a hatch to the conduit in Area 1E.

7N) WAITING ROOM CONDUIT 3

A ladder leads to a hatch to the conduit in Area 1F.

7O) WAITING ROOM CONDUIT 3

A ladder leads to a hatch to the conduit in the northeastern most corner of Area 1A.

7P) STITCHLING'S DESIGN ROOM

Miles of yarn, string, and thread weave around this room. The ceiling is ripped out, creating an opening leading up to Area 2D. Piles of unraveled clothes lie scattered in the corners. Sitting in the center is the **Stitchling**. A sign along the west wall reads *'THE STITCHLING'* while a sign above the eastern path reads *'TRINKET EXCHANGE RECIPES'*.

THE STICHLING

A multi-armed, sessile, mix of scrambling hands, needles, and thread. She was a drider before some weird curse wracked her further. Nobody knows where Jack found her. Not even Jack knows why she exists. Reaver can't find any evidence of the Stitchling's kind in any tome, coven, or divine jaunt. Jack tucks the Stitchling away where few people can find her.

The Stitchling stays dormant until someone enters her room. She doesn't speak, but merely waits with her numerous hands folded in front of her. She's like a machine—give her raw materials, and she uses her magic to knit them into something weird. Much of the stuff found on the **Random Junk** table is meant to be given to her as raw ingredients.

Consult the **Trinket Grimoire** chart in the back to see what the Stitchling can make. Characters can find a copy of the list in Area 7Q. One such recipe (Jack's Key) is a pathway to reach Jack.

7Q) Trinket Shop

Old, dusty shelves, some containing a few items, line the walls of this room. A pedestal in the middle of the room holds a leather-bound tome, and a red mass hums and pulsates in the southeast corner.

A planar sore curdles in the southeast corner, and four pieces of **Random Junk** lie scattered along the shelves.

The Trinket Grimoire rests on a pedestal in plain sight—characters may pick it up and look through it, becoming privy to all items the Stitchling can make for them.

DM'S NOTE:

Give players the **Trinket Grimoire (Players)** chart in the appendix but keep the **Trinket Grimoire (DM)** chart for yourself and consult it when they offer ingredients to the Stitchling.

7R) Happy Jack's Room

This is Jack's private space, where he comes to get away from the hustle and bustle of the Funhouse. Even Jack needs quiet time.

Read or summarize:

The room is tidy, neat, and clean. A picture hangs on the north wall above an antique rocking chair and a small table, which holds a few knick-knacks.

A desk with several pieces of parchment paper, quill, ink, and a small yellow box, rests along the east wall.

A wooden ladder, leading up, is attached to the southern wall and a small tunnel leads off to the west.

The Picture

The picture is of a young Jack and his parents, painted quickly but neatly by a merchant who made a living doing this for new arrivals to Waterdeep.

A young man, accompanied by a woman holding a small child, stand next to a sign that reads *Welcome to Waterdeep*. Scribbled across the bottom of the picture is *'von Zarovich Family'*.

The Table

The table holds a few odds and ends, which Jack picked up during his travels.

A red and blue toy top, a figurine of a black horse wearing a white saddle, a magnifying glass, and two scrolls rest on the table.

Both the toy top and magnifying glass work properly. The scrolls are rare subclasses – *Jester* and *The College of the Clown*. The horse figurine is Jack's trusty mount Jingles, who is a *figurine of wondrous power*.

FIGURINE OF WONDROUS POWER - JINGLES

Wondrous item, uncommon

This figurine of a black horse can become a **horse** wearing a white saddle adorned with jingle bells, which cannot be removed. Once it has been used, it can't be used again until the following dawn. While in horse form, the figurine allows you to cast the *animal messenger* spell on it at will.

For more information, please refer to the 5th edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The Ladder

The ladder leads to a hatch to the conduit in Area 3E.

The Desk

The desk is a basic writing desk with a single drawer, which contains a leather diary. Pages in the diary consist of random sentences, each one addressed to Annalyse. A few of the sentences read:

Annalyse, I hope your training is going well.
Annalyse, I miss your giggle.
Annalyse, your name is beauty to me.
Annalyse, I. I'm at a loss for words when I think of you.

Annalyse is a student of Jack's. She's currently traveling with a circus and training to be an

acrobat. It wasn't Jack's idea to send her off. Reaver persuaded the two that the young woman needed training in an art that neither of them could provide. In truth, Reaver noticed the connection between the two and decided it was in her best interest to separate them.

The Yellow Box

The yellow box is a letterbox with a slit in the top. Scribbled on the box is '*Children, tell Happy Jack what makes you happy. If you do, we'll go to my secret, happy place 😊*'.

The box is empty, but if the adventurers find any of the notes in the yellow balloons of the Balloon Pop (Area 4L) and place one in the box, a portal to Jack in Deep Barovia appears.

Additionally, one of the characters could write their own note. Once the note is placed in the letterbox, the portal to Jack's secret place opens.



PART 3: DEEP BAROVIA

This Barovian planar shard is the true home of Jack—his Funhouse is merely a bridge. Once the party reaches this point, they have proven victorious to his manipulating schemes and found a way to outplay his tricks. Only Jack and his captive children exist in here.

There are several ways to get here:

- **STITCHLING:** The party can have the Stitchling craft Jack's Key, which opens a portal to Deep Barovia.
- **AMVIPER:** Slaying the amvipser causes the nearest mirror to become a portal leading to Deep Barovia.
- **PLANAR VORTEX:** Destroying the Planar Vortex generators opens a portal to Barovia.
- **CHILDREN:** If all party members become children by using the Basin of Youth, Jack voluntarily opens a portal to his lair and invites them in.
- **HAPPY JACK'S ROOM:** Placing one of the notes from Area 4L: Balloon Room into the yellow letterbox, or a character writing their own note and placing it in the box, causes a portal to Deep Barovia to open..

BAROVIAN TIME TREE

When the party use one of the portals, read or summarize:

The portal transports you to a rolling prairie of dead grass. Dusk looms in this cold, dead area, and the smells of rot and decay dance on a cool breeze.

In the distance, a tall tree, blooming with pink flowers and yellow fruit, grows on a hillside covered in lush green grass. A tall figure with fiery red hair laughs and claps as eight children chase each other around the tree.

The portal to Deep Barovia dumps the party in Barovia. A massive, 100-foot-tall tree, blooming with bright flowers and yellow fruit, grows on a small hill. The lush green grass extends in a 25-foot-radius before reverting to dead, grey grass.

Eating the tree's fruit heals 2d4 + 2 HP.

THE CHILDREN & THE TREE

Eight children play around the tree—these are the children who served as sources for the Funhouse. Jack kidnapped them and magically ripped their adulthoods from them to stock his Funhouse, then placed them near his Time Tree to keep it vibrant and young. The kids don't know they are being used as spiritual batteries to brighten up Jack's desolate homeland. They're having fun, oblivious to their plight.

HAPPY JACK

Jack plays with and entertains the children near his tree. Like a birthday party clown, he blows balloons, throws pies, performs magic tricks, and speaks in wacky voices. When he sees the adventurers, he drops the happy act. Play up the sinister atmosphere:

The kids stop laughing...

The tree dims in hue...

Jack's sharp teeth grow out as he slowly turns toward the adventurers...

Jack plays like a criminal caught in the act who wants to justify his actions. He is lost in nostalgic youth because he had a terrible childhood—Jack refuses to accept that the past can never be revisited. He claims he wants to keep the kids "safe," but he's delusional—a criminal who can't accept that *he* is the damaged one and that he has no right to keep these kids for *his* sanity. He doesn't want the PCs to sympathize, but simply know where he stands:

"Children are fun—they don't know what horrors lie in adulthood."

"I made the children better. Now they will never grow old. Now they will never stain the world."

"Be you heroes? I'm these kids' hero. I'm the hero I never had. At this tree, they can be whatever they want to be—for eternity. And you would take that from them? You, heroes?"

"That's the final act. My curtain drops today. Such a good show. Such a fun show..."

"What's your sad origin? Surely one of you has had parents murdered by orcs, goblins—or some other sad backstory? Not for them... not for these kids."

"It all unravels in the end. I can only be immortal for so long, no? Come, then. Take your hero's bounty!"

"I am Jack. I am a Von Zarovich. My family tree is venom, and I am the fang that can't stop biting."

PART 4: CONFRONTING JACK

- **FIGHT:** Jack begins a fight by swallowing whole one of the 8 kids, immediately gaining a perk to his Prodigiphage ability. He then uses his Life Ripper ability, choosing to rip the youth aspect from the adventurers. He then leaps in, claws and teeth tearing away, eating any of the other kids if he gets a chance.
- **SURRENDER:** A socially tactful party may convince Jack that his actions are terrible. He is damaged, a result of childhood trauma and a terrible family line—but that doesn't excuse his actions. If talked into reason, the dusky sky will begin to crack as Jack lets his splinter of Deep Barovia fall apart. He lets the party take the children and opens a portal for them to leave. His planar world then disintegrates, killing him inside.

- **TRICKERY:** Any PCs who enter his realm as children are suspected to be kids who want to play with Jack and the others. The adventurers can use this to their advantage, catching Jack unawares and killing him, or fleeing with the children.

JACK'S TACTICS

GATHER 'ROUND, CHILDREN

Happy Jack commands the charmed children to gather around him, which could make area of effect spells difficult to use.

LOOK! NEW FRIENDS

Happy Jack commands the children to run to their new friends (the adventurers) and hug them or play with them.

ADULTS, GO PLAY

Having pulled the adult aspects from up to 4 of the children, Happy Jack commands these aspects to attack the adventurers.

Each adult aspect has the statistics of a **baboon** with 20 hit points.

ESCAPE

The party can escape Jack's Funhouse by slaying him, which causes the location to crumble and a portal to appear. They can also convince Jack to open a portal to the real world. Having a second Jack's Key can work as well.

Another possibility is, once defeated, Jack's body and the Funhouse begin to slowly dissolve. Once the adventurers exit the Funhouse, it completely dissolves, and Jack's maniacal laugh is heard. This allows you to bring Jack back at a later date.

If you're feeling very bittersweet and in a *deus ex machina* mood, Kova could have learned to be a real magician from watching

Jack. He can create a portal for the PCs and the kids to escape while he stays behind, channeling the spell. Otherwise, the planar shard shatters, dropping the characters in a distant part of Barovia!

VARIATIONS OF JACK

Below are a few fun variations, which you may want to try to add a little extra to the final confrontation.

GIANT JACK

Jack wears floppy red shoes, which allow him to cast *enlarge/reduce* on himself once per day. He uses the shoes to cast *enlarge*.

BIG TUMMY!

Happy Jack can consume up to 6 Medium-sized creatures or smaller. When he does, his belly gets larger. For each creature consumed this way, Happy Jack's movement decreases by 5 feet and he gains 15 temporary hit points. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of Jack's turns. If Jack dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Happy Jack can regurgitate any number of creatures held in his belly, increasing his movement by 5 feet for each creature regurgitated this way.

MAGIC MORSELS

Happy Jack can consume up to 6 Medium-sized creatures or smaller. When he does, his belly gets larger. When Happy Jack consumes 3 Medium-sized or smaller creatures, he gains the following ability:

Innate Spellcasting. Happy Jack's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC

16). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*
3/day each: *confusion*, *enthrall*, *suggestion*
1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

ENVIRONMENT VARIATIONS

Jack can alter 1-square mile of the terrain, and he can't use the same effect twice in one day.

WALK ON THE MOON

Jack alters the gravity, reducing all walking speeds by half. In addition, all jumping and leaping distances are multiplied by 2. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

LET'S ALL FLOAT

Jack alters the gravity, reducing it so that all creatures are affected by the *levitate spell*. This effect lasts for 5 rounds. Jack also drinks a *potion of flying*.

LAND OF CANDY

Jack alters the terrain (see Candy Land map), making it a happy land of candy. Giant, tree-sized candy canes sprout from the ground, boulder-sized gum drops fall from the sky, and a caramel stream appears.

CANDY CANE TREES. Any creature occupying a square that a candy cane tree sprouts from must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they find themselves on top of the candy cane, 60 feet off the ground. On a successful save, the creature jumps out of the way as the candy cane breaks through the earth.

GUM DROP BOULDERS. Any creature occupying a square that a gum drop boulder appears in must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage, is knocked prone, and is trapped under the gum drop. They may use an action to push the gum drop off of them on their next turn. On a successful save, they manage to jump out of the way of the gum drop.

CARAMEL STREAM The 5-foot deep stream mimics the web spell.

Each creature that starts its turn in the stream, or that enters it during its turn, must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the stream or until it breaks free.

A creature restrained by the stream can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained.

The caramel is flammable. Any 5-foot square of caramel exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, though, there is a 50% chance it ignites 2 neighboring squares of caramel. A creature that starts its turn in the fire is dealt 5 (2d4) fire damage.

JACK IN THE BOX

As a bonus action, Jack tosses a small box onto the battlefield, which grows to a 5-foot-cube and releases a small Happy Jack puppet from its top at the end of Jack's turn. The puppet bounces around, giggles, and insults the adventurers.

The Jack in the Box has an AC 12 and 60 hit points. While it remains, its magical energy interferes with spells and attacks, causing any creature within a 60-foot radius centered on the Jack in the Box to have disadvantage on attack rolls made against Jack.

RANDOM JUNK CHART (2D6)

- 11.** Bundle of tulip bulbs (50 gp)
- 12.** Tarnished silverware (100 gp)
- 13.** 1d4+2 boomgun shells (5 gp each)
- 14.** 1 liter of gasoline (5 gp)
- 15.** Bag of baby teeth
- 16.** Rainbow-colored shoestrings
- 21.** Dead bee
- 22.** Furl of paper with "Happy Jack's Jingle" music notes written on it
- 23.** Amviper fang (one use, on hit applies amviper poison)
- 24.** 6-inch-tall porcelain collectible figurine of a Funhouse Gallery member
- 25.** A small item that a PC lost in a previous adventure
- 26.** Emerald ring (50 gp)
- 31.** Chicken's egg that, when cracked, a swarm of spiders emerges.
- 32.** Hippo tooth
- 33.** Pouch of coffee grounds (5 gp)
- 34.** Lump of pure charcoal
- 35.** Dead snake
- 36.** Brass brooch in the shape of a smiling mouth
- 41.** 2-inch diameter glass orb
- 42.** Crocodile teeth necklace
- 43.** Petrified tongue from a convicted murderer
- 44.** Clump of berries
- 45.** Bonzai tree
- 46.** Souvenir shirt "HAPPY JACK'S FUNHOUSE"
- 51.** 1-pound bag of salt
- 52.** 1-pound bag of sugar
- 53.** 1-pound bag of cinnamon
- 54.** 1-pound bag of pepper
- 55.** 10 ft. of twine
- 56.** Small wooden ball
- 61.** Slingshot
- 62.** Broken holy symbol
- 63.** Obsidian arrowhead
- 64.** Green dragon scale
- 65.** Jar with an imp's soul inside
- 66.** Bottle of pixie tears

FUNHOUSE GALLERY CHART

While Happy Jack keeps the children with him in Deep Barovia, he uses their “adult” aspects inside his Funhouse. The adult aspects are hyper aggressive, dangerous, and primitive—they are what the children “want to be when we grow up!” Killing the adult aspects has no effect on the children themselves. Their monster stats are listed in the appendix under **ADULT ASPECTS**.

1	ACKSHIE	Female, strong, wears leather armor. Wields a flail with a bear trap hanging from the end of it. Assumes the PC’s are her next prey and wants to claim them to test her mettle.
2	BRIGGS	Male, scrawny, wears trousers, suspenders, and waders. Has several fishing hooks stuck into his skin—son of a fisherman. Thinks the PCs are “the next big catch” and wants to mount them on his wall.
3	KOVA	Male, bright-eyed, wears a magician’s cape and top hat. Calls himself “THE GREAT KOVA!” and dreams to perform magic for audiences. He thinks the PCs are critics who hate his act.
4	LUCY	Female, heavysset, wears an apron full of knives, cleavers, and rolling pin clubs—daughter of a baker. Thinks the PCs would taste fantastic if baked into a pie.
5	MERVINYA	Female, proper, clad in a noble’s ball gown. Mervinya wants to be a rich lady when she grows up because she’s a homeless, dirty vagabond. Her adult aspect believes the PCs are other destitute poor who want to drag her back to squalor.
6	THALLON	Male, obese, wears a metal barrel around his waist. Thallon is obsessed with pirates and wants to be a cannonball when he grows up. His adult aspect wants to “sink” the PCs. If your campaign doesn’t use cannons, he is, instead, infatuated with trebuchets and catapults.
7	WENDRID	Male, professional, high collared jerkin and grim demeanor. Studying to be a scholar and tutors his peers. Lugs a giant chalkboard with him—casts spells by scrawling runes on the board. Has no chalk, so uses the eroded, bony nub of his index finger. Thinks the party is misbehaving students that need to “pay attention to the chalkboard!”
8	XAOLIXI	Female, withered, wears a headpiece full of focusing lenses. Reads extensively and sets letters at a printing shop. Wants to be a scrivener. Reads people’s bones for stories and wants to know the stories the party carries with them.

Trinket Grimoire (Players)

A collection of bizarre items that the Stitchling can create when brought the listed ingredients. Players looking through the grimoire see the name of the item, the ingredients needed for it, and nothing else. See the Trinket Grimoire (DM) page for details on what happens when the players offer the listed ingredients to the Stitchling.

NAME: Spark's Finger

INGREDIENTS: ring, electricity, weapon from a beast

NAME: Fey's Spade

INGREDIENTS: bloodstained weapon, flower petals/leaves, 8 oz. of any spice

NAME: Cadaver's Rumor

INGREDIENTS: severed head of a dead thing, tongue of a second dead thing, teeth of a third dead thing

NAME: Song's Dancer

INGREDIENTS: song (written down or sung out loud), wooden container, sculpture of a living thing

NAME: Flash's Dazzler

INGREDIENTS: a fabric piece with all colors of the spectrum, small spherical object, 8 oz. of a granular substance

NAME: Serpent's Curse

INGREDIENTS: dead humanoid, dead snake, defiled holy symbol

NAME: Jack's Key

INGREDIENTS: Image of Happy Jack, 1-square foot of mirror, a child's desire

NAME: Wound's Caress

INGREDIENTS: 5 feet of binding material, 1 liter of flammable liquid, drop of blood from a friend

NAME: Venom's Ward

INGREDIENTS: wearable item, piece of a poisonous creature/plant, something burned

NAME: Tasha's Kiss

INGREDIENTS: demon's spirit, two tongues, corpse slain from suicide

NAME: Truth's Spear

INGREDIENTS: large feather, 1 liter of flammable liquid, parchment

NAME: Element's Touch

INGREDIENTS: 8 oz. of either salt, sugar, cinnamon, or pepper, an insect held in an outstretched hand

NAME: Silver's Bane

INGREDIENTS: weapon, pile of silver (100 sp worth), holy symbol

NAME: Rerun's Syndicate

INGREDIENTS: dead body, carving of the dead body, living being of the same race as the dead body

NAME: Marveau's Silence

INGREDIENTS: object with all colors of the rainbow, severed tongue, striped fabric.

Trinket Grimoire (DM)

NAME: Spark's Finger

INGREDIENTS: ring, electricity, weapon from a beast

RESULT: A magic ring that can be used to cast *thunderwave* once per day (Save DC 12).

NOTES: The Stitchling swallows the ring, touches the electricity source to her tongue, then swallows the weapon from the beast. She snaps her fingers, and the magic ring appears on the giver's finger with a low rumbling of thunder.

NAME: Fey's Spade

INGREDIENTS: bloodstained weapon, flower petals/leaves, 8 oz. of any spice

RESULT: A magical sword that, when it deals damage, any blood drawn from the victim is a spray of flower petals or leaves.

NOTES: The Stitchling crushes the petals/leaves with the spice and snorts them. She then takes the bloodstained weapon and plunges it into her chest (or beats her chest with it). She then removes it and offers it back—it glows the color of the petals/leaves used to enchant it.

NAME: Cadaver's Rumor

INGREDIENTS: severed head of a dead thing, tongue of a second dead thing, teeth of a third dead thing

RESULT: Whispering into the severed head's ear causes it to speak the words it hears in common. It only does this with languages it knew in real life (works as a translator).

NOTES: The Stitchling crams the tongue and teeth into the mouth of the head, then kisses it on the lips. She then whispers voicelessly into its ear, and it speaks, "Translator."

NAME: Song's Dancer

INGREDIENTS: song (written down or sung out loud), wooden container, sculpture of a living thing

RESULT: Creates a music box that plays the given song, and the dancer inside is the sculpture.

NOTES: The Stitchling wraps the figurine and the box in thread, then tears the thread off, revealing the finished product.

NAME: Flash's Dazzler

INGREDIENTS: a fabric piece with all colors of the spectrum, small spherical object, 8 oz. of a granular substance

RESULT: A spherical object which works like a scroll of *color spray* with a DC of 12.

NOTES: The Stitchling unravels the fabric, sews it around the spherical object, then kneads the granular substance into it.

NAME: Serpent's Curse

INGREDIENTS: dead humanoid, dead snake, defiled holy symbol

RESULT: The dead corpse comes back to life as an amvipser.

NOTES: The Stitchling places the snake in the corpse's mouth and shoves the holy symbol into the corpse's stomach, then she uses needles to scrawl a scale pattern into the skin. After ten minutes of this, the body rises as an amvipser.

NAME: Jack's Key

INGREDIENTS: Image of Happy Jack, 1-square foot of mirror, a child's desire

RESULT: A portal appears to Deep Barovia.

NOTES: The Stitchling tears the image of Jack to shreds and sprinkles it over the mirror, which absorbs them. Then she holds the mirror up to the child's desire, and the mirror shines a portal against the nearest wall.

NAME: Wound's Caress

INGREDIENTS: 5 feet of binding material, 1 liter of flammable liquid, drop of blood from a friend

RESULT: A single-use bandage that, when applied to a wound, heals 7 (2d4 + 2) hit points.

NOTES: The Stitchling puts the liquid in her mouth and spits it all over the binding material, then she takes the drop of blood and places it in her eye, tears well up, and she lets it drop on the bandage, which enchants it.

NAME: Venom's Ward

INGREDIENTS: wearable item, piece of a poisonous creature/plant, something burned

RESULT: The wearable item is enchanted, giving the wearer of the item resistance to poison, but every time the wearer takes poison damage while wearing the item, it has a 50% chance of losing its magical resistance.

NOTES: The Stitchling rubs the burned object and piece of poisonous creature/plant together to make a paste, then smears it on the wearable object while licking it. It's dry when she hands it over.

NAME: Tasha's Kiss

INGREDIENTS: demon's spirit, two tongues, corpse slain from suicide

RESULT: The demon, Tasha's Kiss, from *The Madhouse of Tasha's Kiss*, is reincarnated into the corpse if she has been slain—if she hasn't, the corpse rises instead as a Chimaera Chron.

NOTES: The Stitchling places the two tongues over the corpse's eyes, then sticks her own long, spindly tongue into the corpse's mouth. She then lets the demon spirit loose, which screams in agony as it is pulled into the corpse. She removes her tongue, and the body transforms into Tasha's Kiss (you may want to remove this entry if you don't have access to *The Madhouse of Tasha's Kiss*).

NAME: Truth's Spear

INGREDIENTS: large feather, 1 liter of flammable liquid, parchment

RESULT: The feather becomes a one-use magical quill that can be used to draw a *zone of truth*.

NOTES: The Stitchling covers the parchment in the liquid, then touches the feather to it, which causes the parchment to dry and shrivel as the feather drains the liquid out.

NAME: Element's Touch

INGREDIENTS: 8 oz. of either salt, sugar, cinnamon, or pepper, an insect held in an outstretched hand

RESULT: The outstretched hand becomes enchanted, dealing an additional 2d6 damage

on the next unarmed strike the wielder makes—if pepper was used, the damage is fire; if cinnamon was used, the damage is poison; if sugar was used, the damage is lightning; if salt was used, the damage is cold.

NOTES: The Stitchling sprinkles the salt, sugar, cinnamon, or pepper over the dead insect in the outstretched hand, then places her hand over it. The hand glows (red for fire, green for poison, yellow for lightning, or blue for cold) until the unarmed strike is made.

NAME: Silver's Bane

INGREDIENTS: weapon, pile of silver (100 sp worth), holy symbol

RESULT: The weapon becomes silvered (PHB, pg 148).

NOTES: The Stitchling eats the silver, then eats the weapon. She holds the holy symbol to her stomach, then spits out the newly silvered weapon.

NAME: Rerun's Syndicate

INGREDIENTS: dead body, carving of the dead body, living being of same race as the dead body

RESULT: The living being dies and the dead body is resurrected as though *raise dead* were cast on it.

NOTES: The Stitchling kills the living being and lets the blood drain over the dead body. She then opens up the dead body's chest, places, the carving inside it, and sews it back up. The dead body then returns to life.

NAME: Marveau's Silence

INGREDIENTS: object with all colors of the rainbow, severed tongue, striped fabric

RESULT: The Stitchling knits a magical black and white striped jumpsuit that, when worn, completely mutes all sound from the wearer.

NOTES: The Stitchling tears the severed tongue, striped fabric, and the object with all colors of the rainbow into strips, then uses her own yarn and thread to sew a custom fitted, white and black striped jumpsuit inlaid with the objects' strips.

CREATURES OF THE FUNHOUSE

ADULT ASPECTS

ACKSHIE

Female, strong, armored. Wields a flail with a bear trap hanging from the end of it and a metal stake on the opposite. Assumes the PC's are her next prey and wants to claim them to test her mettle.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Strength +5

Skills Athletics +5, Survival +4

Condition Immunities fear

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Ackshie makes three attacks, one with her bear trap and two with her stake.

Bear Trap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 13).

Stake. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. This attack has advantage against foes grappled by Ackshie's bear trap.

BRIGGS

Male, scrawny, wears trousers, suspenders, and waders. Has several fishing hooks stuck into his skin—son of a fisherman. Thinks the PC's are “the next big catch” and wants to mount them on his wall.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wisdom +6

Condition Immunities fear

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Briggs makes two hook attacks.

Hook. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 6 (2d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

KOVA

Male, bright-eyed, wears a magician's cape and top hat. Calls himself "THE GREAT KOVA!" and dreams to perform magic for audiences. He thinks the PC's are critics who hate his act.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (mage armor)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Charisma +7

Condition Immunities fear

Skills Sleight of Hand +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Kova is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Kova has the following sorcerer spells memorized:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, blade ward, fire bolt, mending, prestidigitation.*

1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (4 slots): *blur, hold person, shatter*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear, major image*

4th level (2 slots): *banishment*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

LUCY

Female, heavyset, wears an apron full of rolling pins and baking flour. Wants to take over her family's bakery when she grows up. Thinks the PC's would taste fantastic if baked into a pie.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Condition Immunities fear

Skills Sleight of Hand +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Lucy makes two cutlery attacks.

Baker's Pin. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Flour Dust (Recharge 5-6). Lucy throws baking flour in a 15-foot circular radius. Anyone in the radius and within line of sight must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

MERVINYA

Female, proper, clad in a noble's ball gown. Wants to be a rich lady when she grows up because she's a homeless, dirty vagabond urchin. Always wants to "advance up" in the world and wants to take the PC's place in the world by swapping minds with them.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)

Condition Immunities fear

Saving Throws Charisma +8

Skills Deception +8, Persuasion +8

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Caste Up. Mervinya targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see her, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or else swap consciousness with Mervinya—her mind is now in the target's body, and the target's mind is now in her body.

Mervinya can use any weapons, spells, or special abilities of the new body she possesses. A creature whose mind is in Mervinya's body can't use this ability, but Mervinya can still use this ability even if she is in someone else's body. If Mervinya's original body is slain, all swapped minds return to their original bodies. If the body Mervinya is possessing is slain, both her consciousness and the body die, and all other minds stay in their current bodies.

THALLON

Male, obese, wears a metal barrel around his waist. Obsessed with pirates and wants to be a cannonball when he grows up. Wants to "sink" the PC's. If your campaign doesn't use canons, he is instead infatuated with trebuchets and catapults.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Condition Immunities fear

Saving Throws Strength +6

Skills Athletics +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Charge. If Thallon moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a headbutt attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Running Leap. Thallon's long jump is up to 30 feet and his high jump is up to 15 feet with a running start.

Actions

Headbutt. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

XAOLIXI

Female, withered, wears a headpiece full of focusing lenses. Reads extensively and sets letters at a printing shop. Wants to be a scrivener. Reads people's bones for stories and wants to know the stories the party carries with them.

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Intelligence +6

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Condition Immunities fear

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13, truesight 60 ft.

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Avert. Whenever Xaolixi suffers damage from an attack, she immediately casts *darkness* as a free action centered on herself.

Hush. Any humanoid that speaks above a whisper within 30 feet of Xaolixi must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or suffer 4 (1d6) psychic damage.

Actions

Lens Beam. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. Hit 14 (4d6) radiant damage

WENDRID

Male, professional, high collared jerkin and grim demeanor. Studying to be a scholar and tutors his peers. Lugs a chalkboard with him like a shield—casts spells by scrawling runes on the board. Has no chalk, so uses the eroded, bony nub of his index finger—horrifying sound. Thinks the party is misbehaving students that need to “pay attention to the chalkboard!”

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (chalkboard shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Condition Immunities fear

Saving Throws Intelligence +5, Wisdom +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Wendrid is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Wendrid has the following cleric spells prepared, needing his chalkboard as a holy symbol:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, sanctuary, shield of faith*

2nd level (4 slots): *calm emotions, silence, spiritual weapon (yardstick quarterstaff)*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, glyph of warding*

4th level (2 slots): *freedom of movement*

Actions

Chalkboard. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

AMVIPER

Medium undead (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +7

Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +6, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. If the amvipper is within sight of a highly reflective surface, it can use its action to polymorph into a Medium swarm of poisonous snakes or a Huge giant constrictor snake, or back into its true form. While in swarm of poisonous snakes form, the amvipper can't speak, its walking speed is 30 feet, and it has a swim speed of 30 feet. It can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and it can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny snake. While in giant constrictor snake form, its speed is 30 feet, and it has a swim speed of 30 feet. Its statistics, other than its size and speed, are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Legendary Resistance (1/day). If the amvipper fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Reflective Death. When slain, the amvipper's corpse is pulled towards the nearest highly reflective surface. This surface becomes a portal leading to Deep Barovia and Happy Jack, and the amvipper's corpse appears on the other side of the portal.

Reflective Evasion. The amvipper does not reflect an image off of any surface.

Regeneration. The amvipper regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and is within sight of a highly reflective surface. If the amvipper takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the amvipper's next turn.

Actions

Multiattack (Amvipper Form Only). The amvipper makes two attacks, only one of which can be an injection attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Constrict (Giant Constrictor Snake Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the amvipper can't constrict another target.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the amvipper can grapple the target (escape DC 15).

Injection. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the amvipper, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, transforming into a swarm of poisonous snakes on a failed save. While in swarm of poisonous snakes form, the target can't speak, its walking speed is 30 feet, and it has a swim speed of 30 feet. It can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and it can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny snake. The target also can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

AMVIPER SCALING SUGGESTIONS:

CR 3: change attacks +4 to hit. Reduce save DCs to 13. Change AC to 14 and Hit Points to 50. Remove Legendary Resistance.

CR 10: Change attacks to +7 to hit and increase damage by an additional damage die. Increase save DCs to 16. Change AC to 17 and Hit Points to 90.

BABOON

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft., 30 ft. climb

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Pack Tactics. The baboon has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the baboon's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 – 1) piercing damage.

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

BUBBY – WEREHIPPO

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 10 (in humanoid form, 17 in hippo and hybrid forms)

Hit Points 153 (18d8+72)

Speed 30 ft. (swim 30 ft. in hippo or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. The werehippo can use its action to polymorph into a Large hippo-humanoid hybrid or into a Large hippo, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size and AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Actions

Multitattack. In hippo form, the werehippo makes two bite attacks. In humanoid form, it makes two slam attacks. In hybrid form, it can attack like a hippo or a humanoid.

Bite (Hippo or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with hippo lycanthropy.

Charge (Hippo or Hybrid Form Only). If the werehippo moves at least 15 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with its tusks on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Slam (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

BUBBY

Bubby is “different” in that he was originally a hippo bitten by a werehippo (lycanthropy only affects humanoids, but this was a special case). Therefore, his hippo form is his default form. Make the following changes to the werehippo stats to accommodate for Bubby:

His Intelligence score 3

He knows no languages

Spells that affect animals and beasts also affect him.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AS WEREHIPPOS

The character gains a Strength of 19 if their score isn't already higher, and a +1 bonus to AC while in hippo or hybrid form (from natural armor). Attack and damage rolls for the natural weapons are based on Strength.

Bite (Hippo or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d10 + X piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werehippo lycanthropy.

Charge (Hippo or Hybrid Form Only). If the werehippo moves at least 15 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with its tusks on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

HAPPY JACK

Medium fiend (demon), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft., hover 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +6, Cha +7

Skills Deception +6, Perception +6, Perform +7, Sleight of Hand +6

Condition Immunities fear, poisoned

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (1/day). If Happy Jack fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Jack has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Premonition. Jack always acts first in initiative.

Prodigiphage. If Jack has swallowed one of the eight kids after making a bite attack against them, he gains the following abilities based on who he ate:

Ackshie: His fanged mouth can extend from his face, granting a 15-foot reach on his bite attacks.

Briggs: His mouth stretches down to his stomach like a largemouth bass, giving disadvantages to anyone who must make Dexterity saves to not be swallowed.

Kova: Jack can cast *fear* once per day (spell save DC 15).

Lucy: Jack gains Lucy's Flour Dust ability.

Mervinya: Jack can shapeshift into the form of any child the PCs have met in their past. He has innate knowledge of these children's mannerisms and history.

Thallon: Jack gains resistance to slashing and piercing damage.

Xaolixi: Jack can cast *blindness/deafness* once per day (spell save DC 15)

Wenrig: Jack instantly casts *dispel magic* as a free action (spellcasting ability Charisma).

Actions

Multiattack. Jack makes two claw attacks, or one claw attack and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage (nonlethal if using it on a child). If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by Jack. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, and it has total cover against attacks and other effects from the outside.

If Jack takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside him, he must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of him. If Jack dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Liferipper (1/day). Jack tears the childhood out of an adult, or he tears the adulthood out of a child (he has already torn the adulthoods out of the eight children, so they are unaffected). Everyone within 30 feet of Jack must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw.

Failure against an adult means their child form appears next to them (use the **BABOON** stats to represent the child, but with a number of Hit Dice equal to the character's). Failure against a child means the adult form appears next to them (use the **BANDIT** stats to represent the adult, but with a number of Hit Dice equal to the character's).

The aspects created with this ability are loyal to Jack and will harass, attack, or taunt all foes. They also know their respective characters' secrets and will blurt them out.

HAPPY JACK SCALING SUGGESTIONS:

CR 3: change attacks +3 to hit. Reduce save DCs to 12. Change AC to 13 and Hit Points to 101.

CR 10: Change attacks to +7 to hit and increase damage by an additional damage die. Increase save DCs to 16. Change AC to 17 and Hit Points to 206. Add the following:

Innate Spellcasting. Happy Jack's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*
3/day each: *confusion*, *enthrall*, *misty step*, *suggestion*

1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

Joyful Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 60 feet of Happy Jack must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed by Happy Jack for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature becomes immune to Happy Jack's Joyful Presence for 24 hours.

Whenever Happy Jack deals damage to the charmed creature, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

CR 14: change attacks to +8 to hit and increase damage by an additional damage die. Increase save DCs to 18. Change AC to 18 and Hit Points to 250. Add the following:

Innate Spellcasting. Happy Jack's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*
3/day each: *confusion*, *enthrall*, *misty step*, *suggestion*
1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

Joyful Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 60 feet of Happy Jack must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed by Happy Jack for 1 minute. On a

successful save, the creature becomes immune to Happy Jack's Joyful Presence for 24 hours.

Whenever Happy Jack deals damage to the charmed creature, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Happy Jack fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

HAPPY JACK'S POSTER

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 66 (12d10)

Speed 10 ft., 10 ft. fly

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages -

Challenge 4 (50 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The poster is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by dispel magic, the poster must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

Damage Transfer. While it is grappling a creature, the poster takes only half the damage dealt to it, and the creature grappled by the poster takes the other half.

False Appearance. While the poster remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal poster.

Actions

Smother. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* The creature is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, blinded, and at risk of suffocating, and the poster can't smother another target. In addition, at the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Feebles – Zombie Monkey

Small beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., jump 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Zombie Monkey

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Limited Immortality. The zombie monkey has limited immortality. If slain, it resurrects in 30 seconds. Though, each time it does, its body appears more disheveled and decayed. Once the zombie monkey has been slain 10 times, it does not resurrect again.

Limited Telepathy. Once someone accepts the zombie monkey as friendly, a telepathic-like bond is created between the two; though, speaking to each other requires them to speak like monkeys. This link can only be established with one creature at a time.

Misunderstanding. A zombie mind isn't great at understanding orders. When the zombie monkey is given a command or task, there is a 50% chance that they won't understand. Instead, they may not complete the task, or they may do something entirely different.

Standing Leap. The zombie monkey's long jump is up to 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Oinkfat – Immortal Pig

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Immortality. Oinkfat is immortal. Whenever they are reduced to 0 hit points, they die. After 5 minutes, the body reconstitutes and Oinkfat jumps to life.

Charge. If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the boar takes 7 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

STITCHLING

Large monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)

Speed 30 ft., 30 ft. climb

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The Stitchling has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The Stitchling's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Spider Climb. The Stitchling can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the Stitchling has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

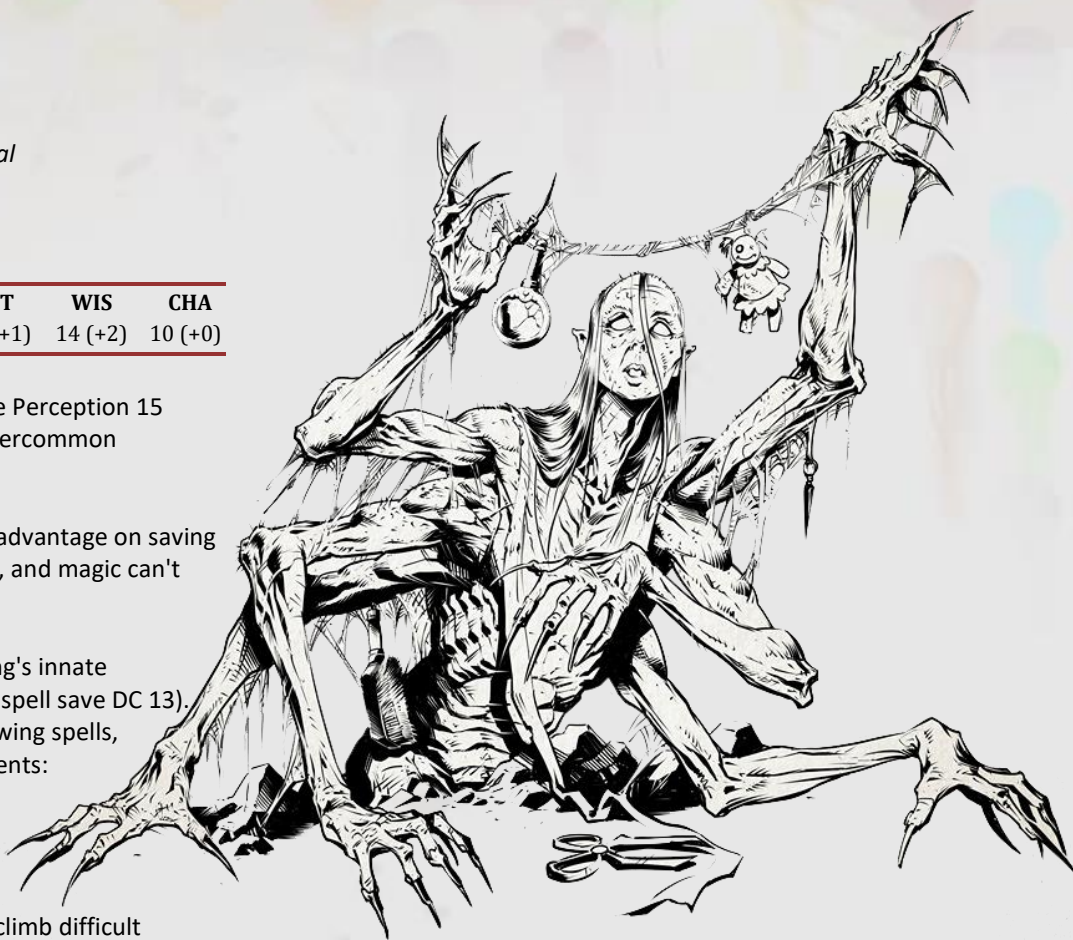
Web Walker. The Stitchling ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The Stitchling makes three attacks with her needle fingers. She can replace one of those attacks with a bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.

Needle Fingers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 +3) slashing damage.



SWARM OF POISONOUS SNAKES

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny snake. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CHARACTER HISTORY INFORMATION

CHARACTER NAME: _____

(INCLUDE WHATEVER YOU LIKE FROM BIRTH TO 12 YEARS OLD)

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY:

FAVORITE ADULT MEMORY:

WORST CHILDHOOD MEMORY:

WORST ADULT MEMORY:

CHILDHOOD BEST FRIEND:

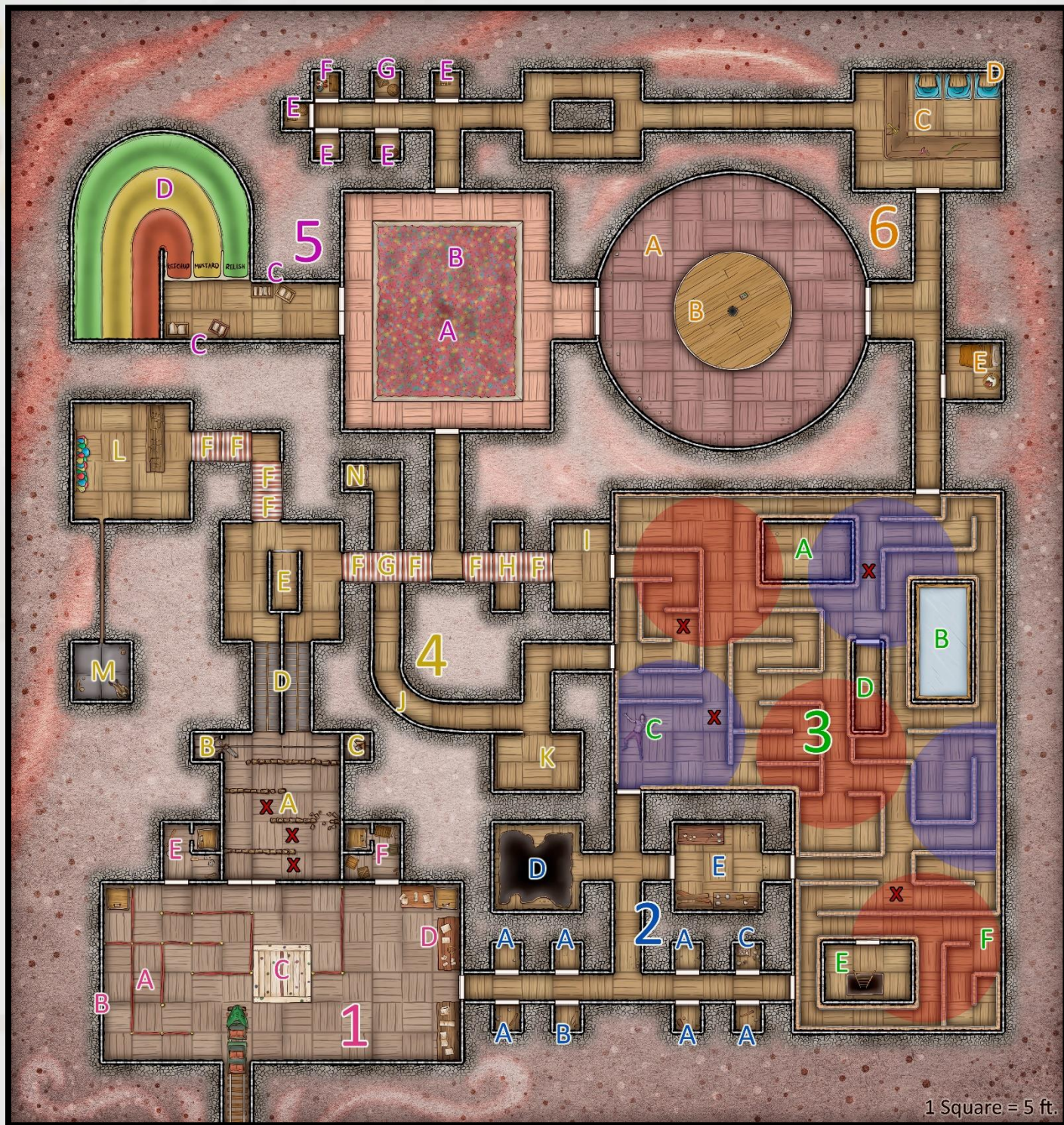
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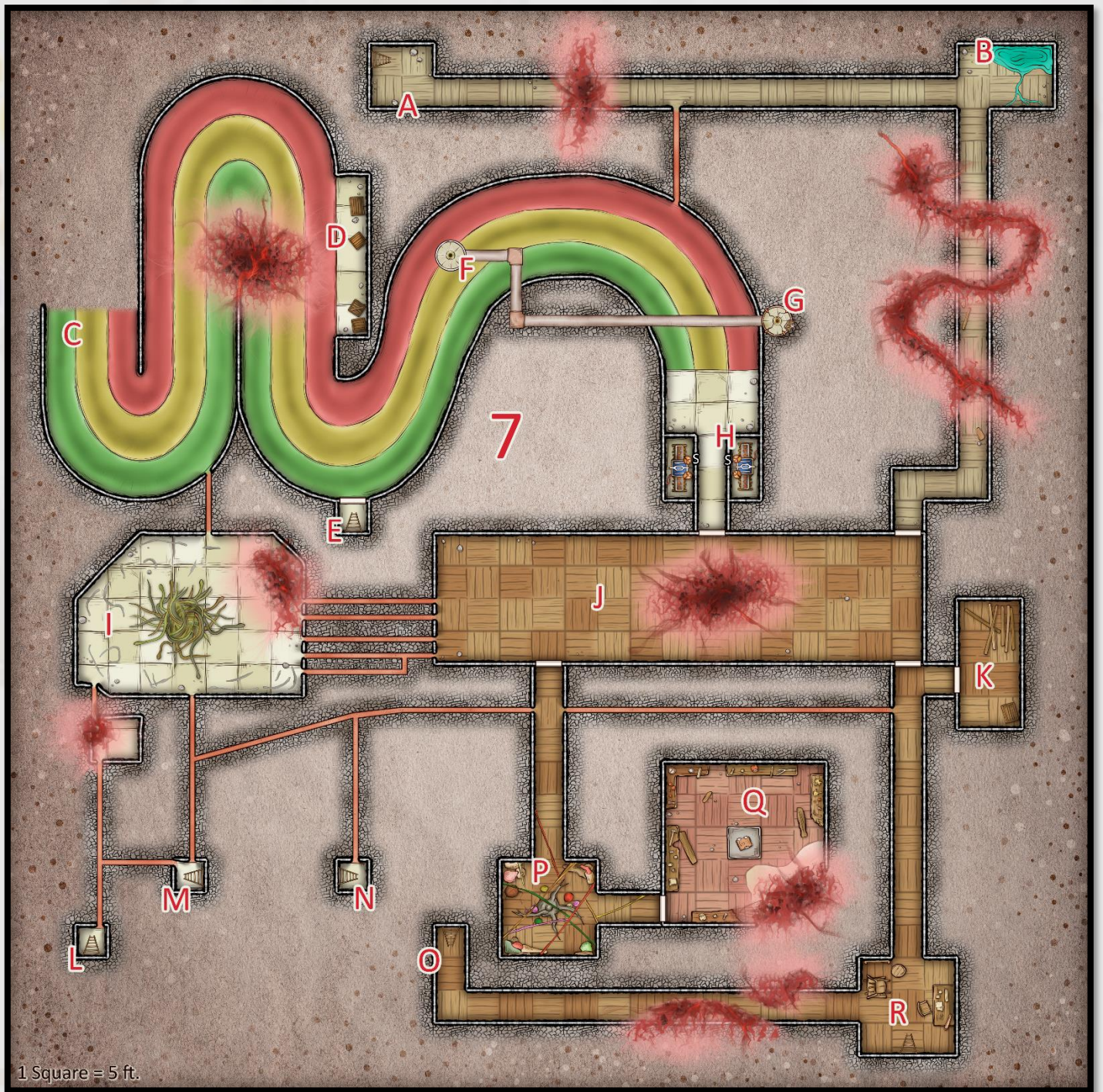
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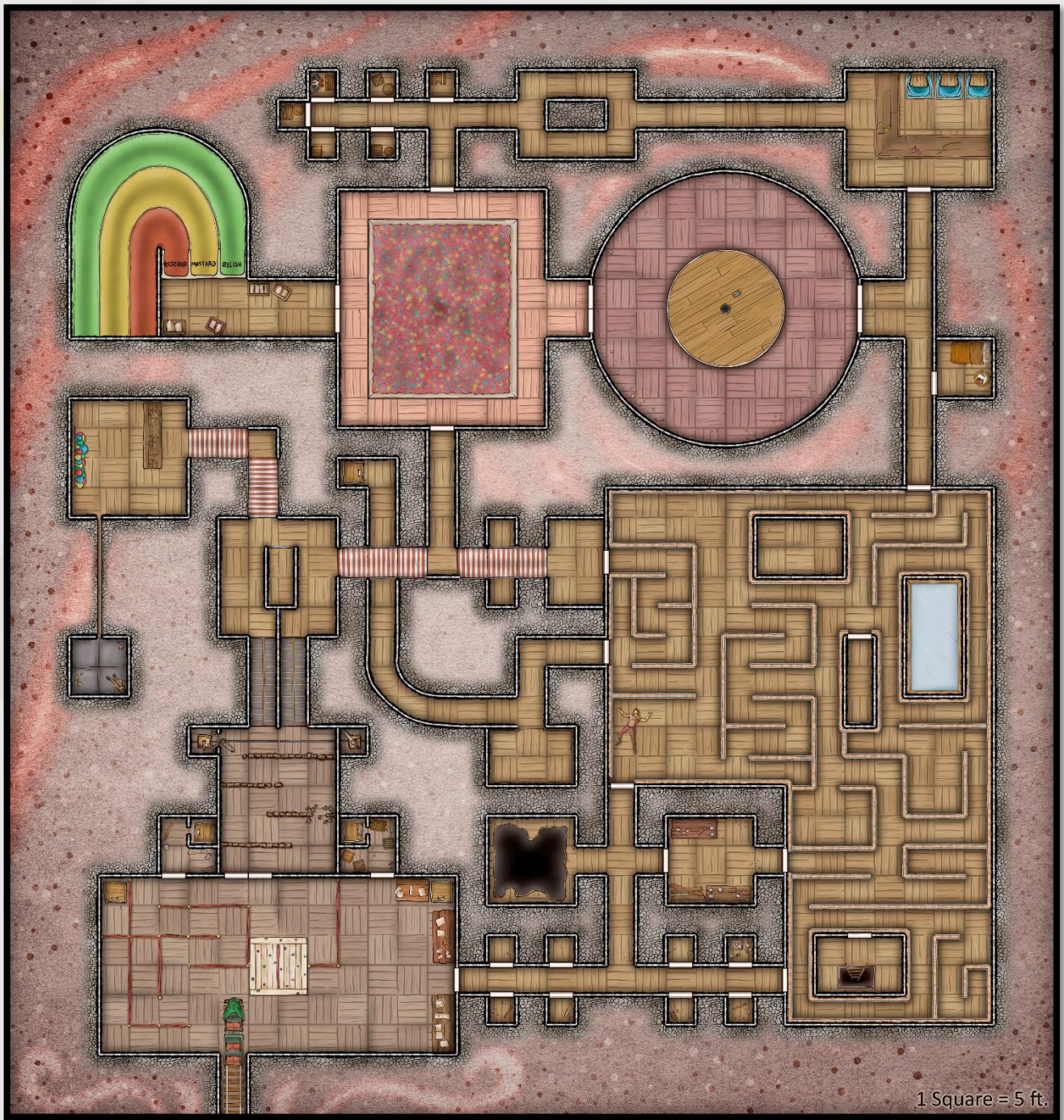
THING THAT SCARED YOU MOST AS A CHILD:

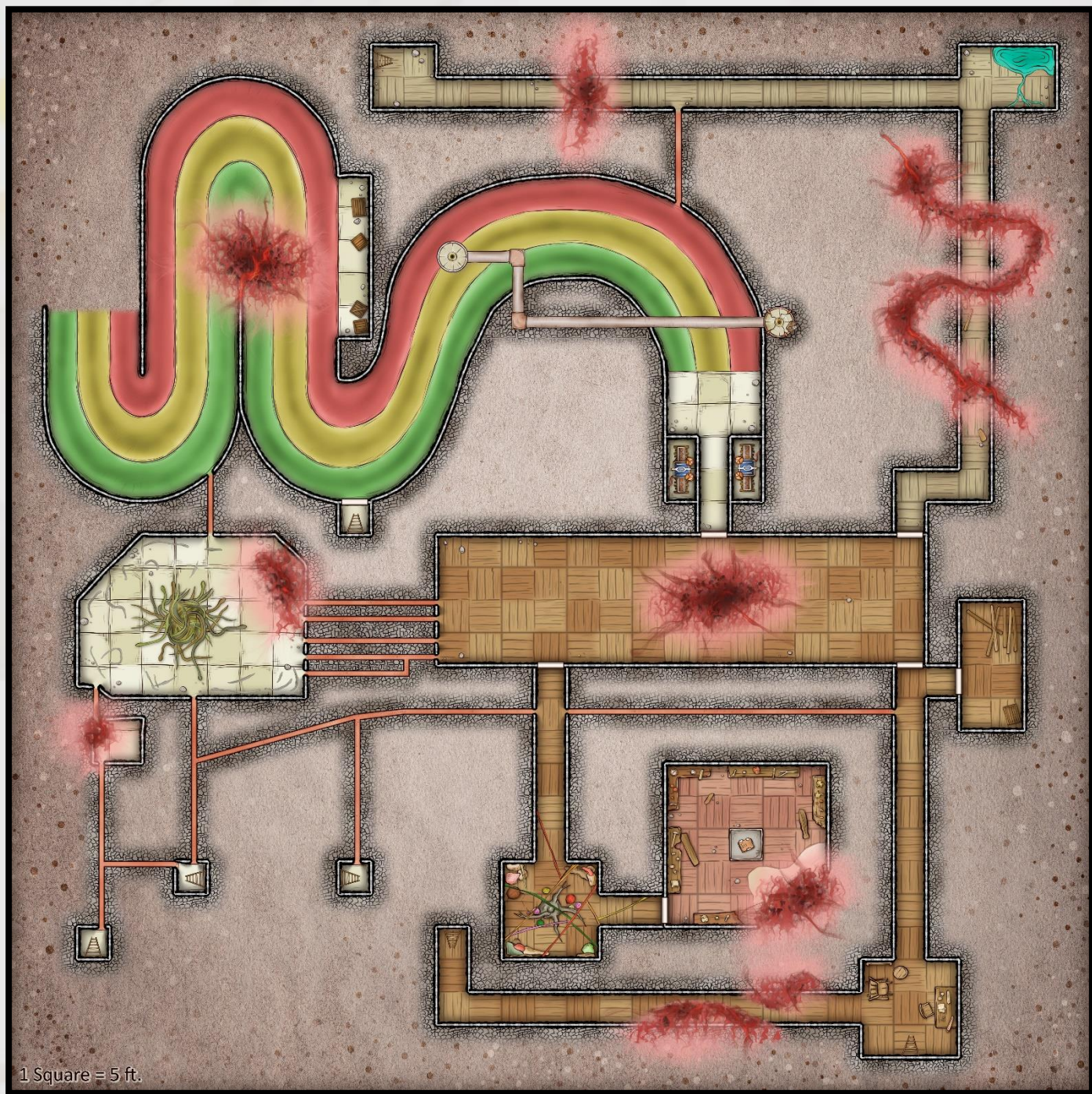
THING THAT SCARES YOU THE MOST NOW:

CHILDHOOD PET:

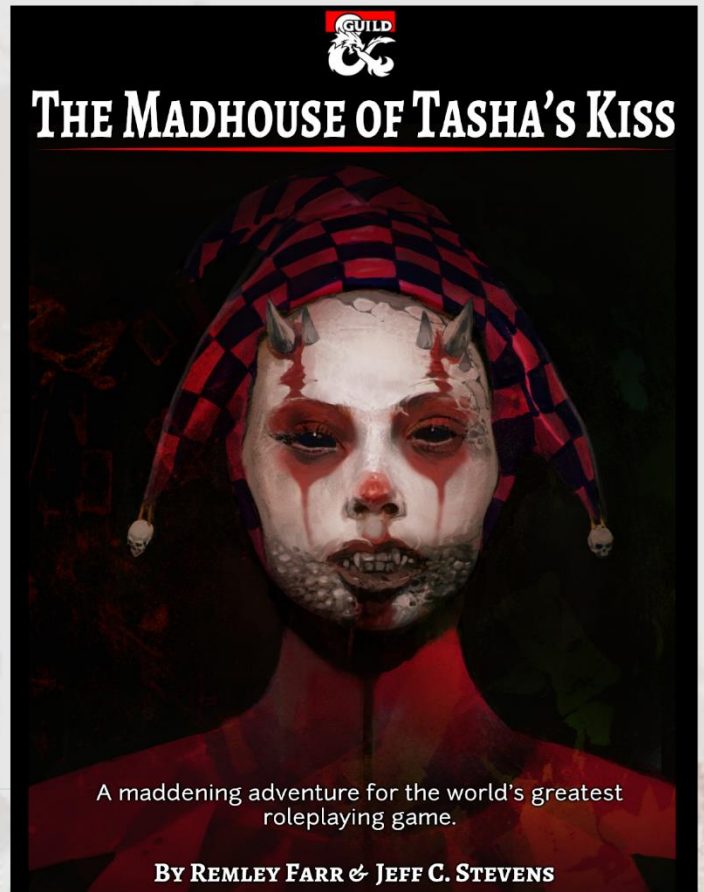
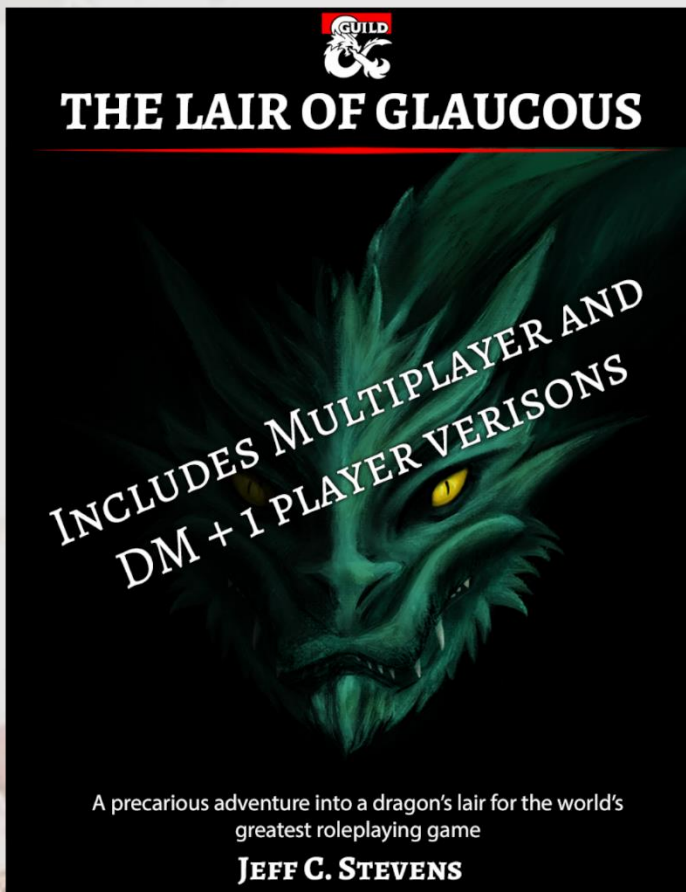
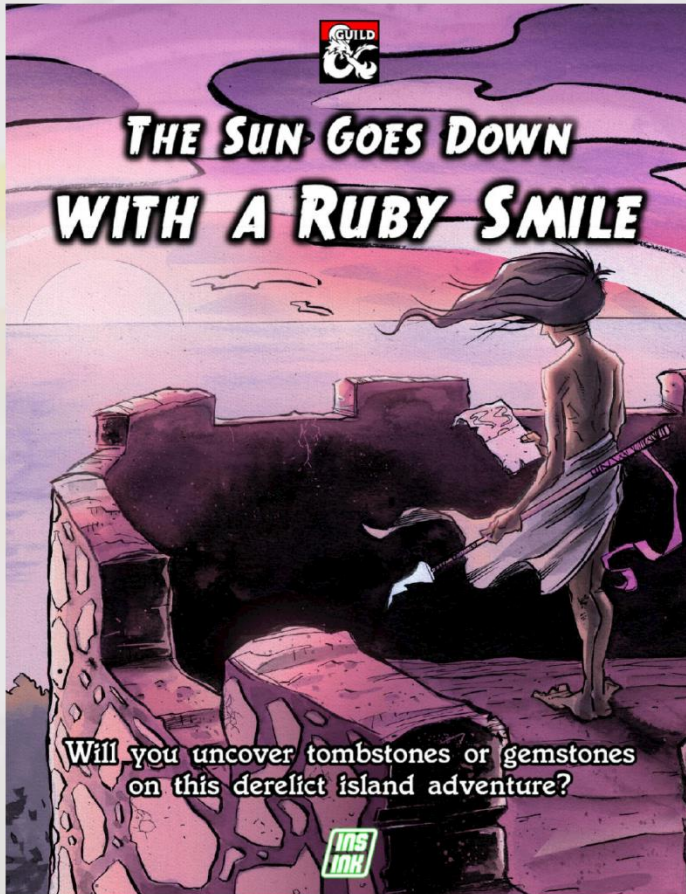








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HAPPY JACK'S RARE SUBCLASSES



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PRODUCED BY: JEFF C. STEVENS @JCORVINSTEVENS

SPECIAL THANKS: HITEN DAVE, JESSE PETERSON, AND ALAN TUCKER



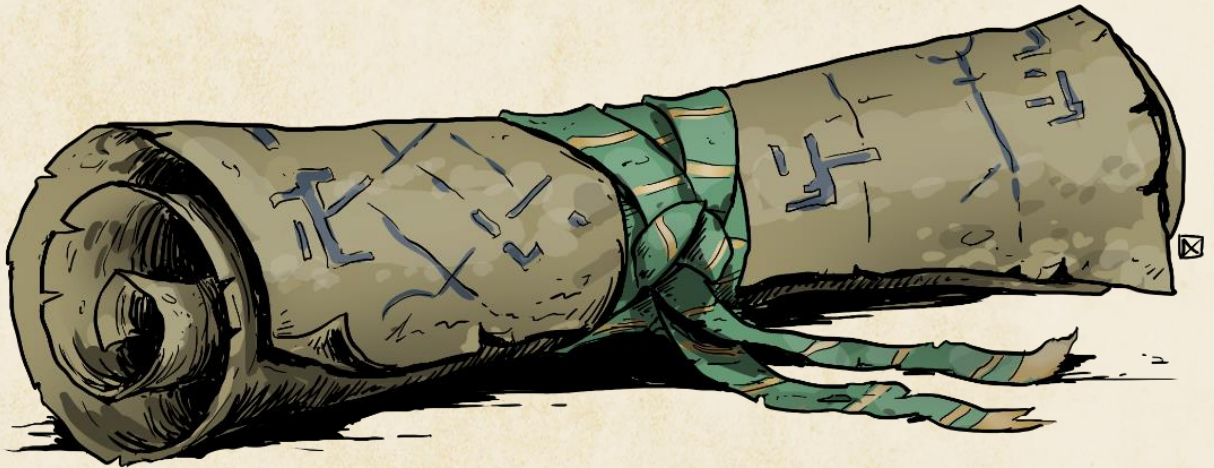
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A BRIEF HISTORY

The clown known as Happy Jack has procured many rare things during his life and travels. These two subclasses and four magic items are just a sampling of what brave adventurers may find within Happy Jack's Funhouse.



ROGUE

THE JESTER

Most who live the hard life in the underworld take to thieving or murder for hire. Their grim demeanors show the harsh reality of their lives. Not the Jester. A Jester listens to the grand joke that is life and laughs maniacally at its fatal punchline. With flashing blades and a razor-sharp wit, the Jester spends their life showing others the truth: that eventually, everything is funny...if you just keep laughing. Some Jesters find their way to the high courts, their dark humor being appreciated by pampered court royals, while others take a more evangelical approach to spreading the laughter.

Jesters tend to dress their part, wearing a mix of dark and bright colors to highlight the duality of their sense of humor. Many wear brightly painted masks as well, showing the world an unwavering smile. The Jester is a master of goading their enemies into making mistakes and striking when an enemy is at their weakest.

JESTER ABILITY

Your save DC is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

EVERY JOKE NEEDS A BUTT

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn to follow the golden rule of humor: *it's only funny if someone doesn't think so.*

You gain proficiency in the Charisma (Performance) skill. If you are already proficient, you gain expertise.

SET 'EM UP

Also at 3rd level, you gain the ability to *set up* targets. As a Bonus Action, you choose a creature that you can see within 30 feet of you. The creature must have an Intelligence score of

6 or higher, but you do not need to share a language with the creature as physical humor is universal. You begin a particularly clever insult at their expense.

The target makes an Intelligence saving throw against your Jester DC. On a failed save, the creature is considered *set up* until the end of your next turn. If you attempt to *set up* the same creature on your next turn, they have disadvantage on the save.

A creature that is *set up* has disadvantage on weapon attack rolls made against any creature other than you.

PUNCHLINE

Starting at 3rd level, as an Action, you can drop the punchline to a joke at your target's expense.

You may cast the *vicious mockery* spell twice per day.

This spell's damage increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4).

If the creature is *set up*, you add your sneak attack bonus as psychic damage if the creature meets the requirements for sneak attack. This does not end the *set up* condition.

KNOCK 'EM DOWN

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn to goad your enemies into unbalanced attacks. As an Action, you make an intentionally clumsy melee attack against a target to goad them into exposing themselves. You roll a melee attack against a target that you can see within range subtracting 10 from the result. If the attack hits, resolve damage normally. If the attack misses, the target must use its action on its next turn to make a melee attack against you. If it is *set up*, it makes the attack with disadvantage. If the creature misses this attack, it falls prone and its movement is reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Regardless of the result, this ends the *set up* condition.

You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

DARK COMEDY

Starting at 9th level, you find humor in even the grimmest moments. You see death as the greatest joke of all and are not afraid to laugh in its face. If any member of the party is reduced to 0 hit points, you may use your Reaction to make a bleak joke about the party's chances. All allies within a 30-foot-radius of you gain temporary hit points equal to twice your Jester level and may add the Jester's proficiency bonus to their next spell or weapon attack in addition to their own.

You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

JOKE'S ON YOU!

Starting at 13th level, your skill at goading enemies into attacks and your combat experience allow you to manipulate enemies into inadvertently attacking each other. As a Reaction, when a creature misses a melee attack against you, you can deflect that attack at another creature you can see within 5 feet. If the original attack roll would hit the new target, damage is resolved normally.

If the new target is *set up*, both creatures are knocked prone, regardless of the result of the attack. This ends the *set up* condition.

LAST LAUGH

A Jester always gets the last laugh. At 17th level, when you critically strike a creature that is *set up* and Sneak Attack is available, you may immediately make an additional attack. If the attack hits, you may use your Sneak Attack dice again. This ends the *set up* condition.

BARD

COLLEGE OF THE CLOWN

The subtle feigned incompetence of the College of Clowns brings its members the greatest reward: having their enemies underestimate them. Though their peers in other colleges may laugh at the ostentatious face paint or gigantic shoes, a Clown knows that a true performance is the one you never know you're watching. Clowns master the art of feigned ineptness. They use their unparalleled balance and acrobatics for intentionally falling, dropping things, or causing accidents without putting themselves at risk. And, by doing so, lull their enemies into a false sense of confidence; all while bringing a smile to the faces of others.

MASTER TUMBLER

When you choose this college at 3rd level, you become proficient in the Dexterity (Acrobatics) ability. If you already proficient, you gain expertise.

I MEANT TO DO THAT

Also at 3rd level, when you choose this college you learn to pass off your mistakes as intentional jokes. When you fail an ability check, you can choose to reroll the check and add a Bardic Inspiration die to the result without expending one of your die. You must take the second result. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

Also at 3rd level, when you are wearing no armor or light armor and not carrying a shield, as a Bonus Action on your turn, you enter into a masterful tumbling routine that lasts for 1 minute. You flail and fall, appearing to be barely able to stay on your feet for even a moment, all the while maintaining perfect control. When you enter this routine, you expend a Bardic Inspiration die. For the duration, all

weapon attacks against you suffer a penalty equal to the result, but your movement speed is halved. As a masterful performer, the tumbling routine does not impact your ability to take actions such as attacking or casting spells. You can use your Bonus Action to end this routine.

BALLOONOMANCY

Starting at 6th level, you learn a secret sect of magic known only to the College of Clowns, Balloonomancy. This nearly lost magical art utilizes an amazing alchemical component capable of stretching far beyond its original size while remaining airtight. You learn the following spells. They are always prepared and do not count against your prepared spells for the day. However, you must use a spell slot to cast them.

Additionally, you gain proficiency with the Balloon Maker's Kit. This special kit can be purchased in most major cities and costs 10 gp. You can use this kit to craft materials for balloonomancy using alchemical supplies equal to 1 silver for each balloon created.

Balloon Animals

3rd level balloonomancy, 1 Minute, self, concentration up to 1 hour, (S, M a single balloon)

Tying your balloons using intricate twists and knots, you create a magically animated creature roughly the shape of a dog or a giraffe, but only 1 foot in length. For every additional minute you spend casting this spell, you can create an additional balloon animal, up to a maximum of 5. The creature is sentient and can understand your commands but cannot speak. You can order your balloon animal to perform simple tasks such as going to a place, waiting, or retrieving a small object.

When the balloon animal is reduced to 0 hit points, it releases a cacophonous noise. Each creature in a 10-foot radius originating from the balloon animal must make a Constitution saving

throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 1d10 thunder damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

BALLOON ANIMAL

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)

Hit Points 1

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, blinded, charmed, deafened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft, the construct cannot see beyond this distance

Anyone Can Float

2nd level balloonmancy, Action, touch, concentration up to 1 minute, (S, M three balloons)

You pull three large balloons from your pocket and make a melee spell attack against a creature you can see within range. On a hit, you clip the balloons to the creature as they begin to magically inflate.

The creature is lifted 10 feet into the air. On the start of each its turns, the creature rises 10 feet to a maximum of 10 feet x the spell slot level used to cast the spell. A creature may either use an action to attack a balloon, or, at the end of each of its turns, make a Dexterity saving throw to attempt to escape. If it frees itself, it immediately drops to the space it previously occupied space. At the end of the fall, the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it fell, to a maximum of 20d6. The creature lands prone, unless it avoids taking damage from the fall.

If that space is now occupied, the occupying creature takes half the original falling damage and is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space.

When the spell ends, the balloons slowly drift back down to the closest unoccupied space before disappearing. If the creature is still attached, they are unharmed.

BANG!

Starting at 14th level, your mastery over buffoonery extends to your spellcasting. When a creature within 60 feet of you casts a spell requiring material components, you can use your reaction to disrupt the spell's magical energies. The creature makes a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the spell fails, and the spell's effect is replaced with clownish sight-gag props.

For example, a spellcasting focus that would have fired a *magic missile* may instead simply shoot out a flag with the word bang on it, a *shield* spell may appear as a totally ineffective tiny shield, or a *haste* spell may only affect the creature's vocal chords so that they speak in a high pitch.

At the start of the creature's next turn, the disrupted magical energies in their spell casting focus produce immense feedback dealing 6d6 force damage to the target. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

MAGIC ITEMS

THE HANDSHAKE

Wondrous item, rare, (requires attunement)

These gloves have a small magically charged gem in the center of each palm.

When the gem is touched it emits an electrical charge, dealing 1d4 lightning damage. The wearer is protected from this charge by the lining in the gloves. While wearing these gloves your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d4 lightning damage.

CLOWN CARRIAGE

Wondrous item, very rare

This brightly colored, two-person carriage is small enough to be pulled by a single donkey or other comparable animal.

Opening the door to the carriage reveals a large, lavish chamber capable of comfortably seating 10 people. The sitting area has a small dining area, as well as a sleeping car, in which one person can comfortably rest.

Several enchanted windows allow passengers to see outside the carriage without permitting outsiders a view of the interior. From the outside, the carriage always appears empty.

The carriage can hold up to 10 Medium-sized creatures along with their basic traveling supplies. The carriage has a weight limit of 2,000 pounds. If this limit is exceeded, the carriage cannot be moved.

HAMMER OF BONKING

Weapon (warhammer), very rare, (requires attunement)

A large, squishy red hammerhead attached to a long, white handle.

This magical warhammer is a finesse weapon which deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. In addition, on a successful hit, the warhammer deals an additional 1d6 thunder damage as the hammerhead lets out a loud squeak.

On a successful hit, you may use a bonus action to cast the *thunderwave* spell, with the target being the point of the spell's origin. This ability may be used once per day and recharges at dawn.

FABULOUS FLOWER

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

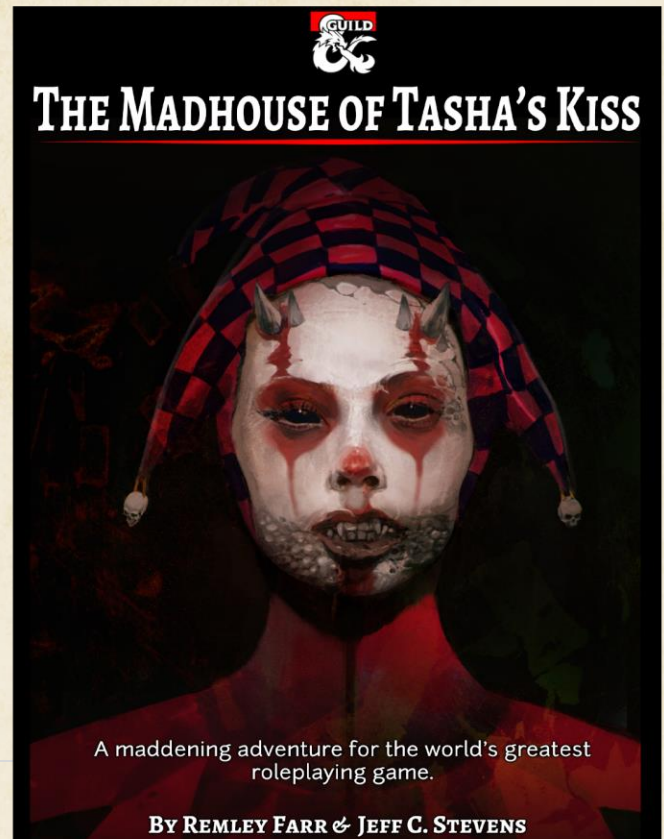
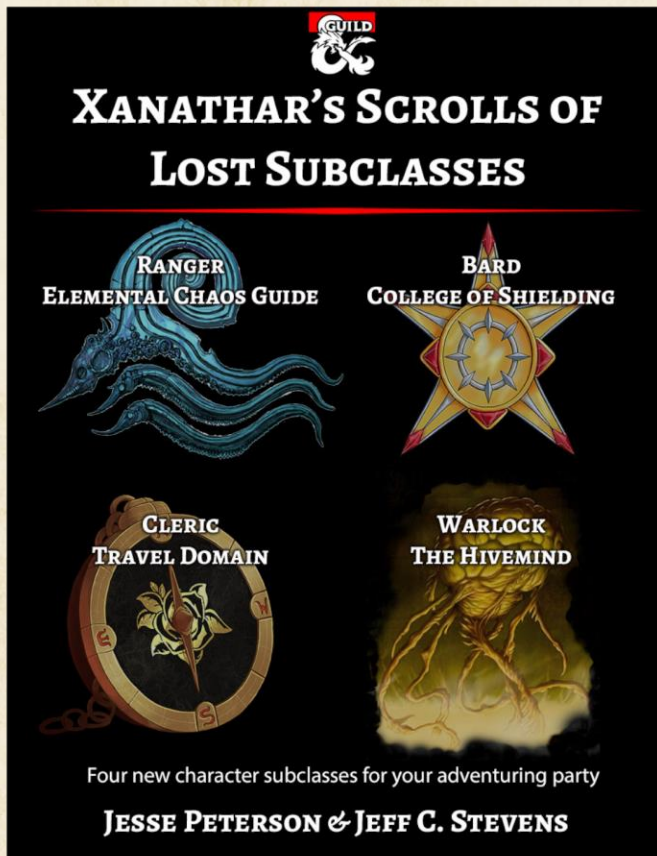
A brooch in the shape of a large, colorful flower.

This brooch has 3 charges. As an action, you can speak the brooch's command word and expend 1 charge to cast one of the following cantrips (spell Save DC 13); though, each has a range of only 15 feet:

Poison Spray
Acid Splash
Frostbite

The brooch regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

LOOKING FOR MORE CONTENT?





Icewind Dale: Art of the Frostmaiden

Dragon+ spoke with the artists tasked with bringing Auril's three distinct forms to life.

You wait thirty-three issues for a tripartite creature to show up and then two come along at once! The three kobolds in a trench coat you'll find on the following page can be described using the first definition of tripartite (shared by or involving three parties), while lesser god Auril fits the second definition of that word (consisting of three parts).

Auril's first form is a hunched, seven-foot tall biped her worshipers call the Cold Crone. She has black talons, cloven hooves, and a pair of curved goat horns that protrude from the head of a snowy owl, with grayish-white wolf fur covering her body from the neck down.

Auril's second form is that of a ten-foot-tall woman made entirely of ice and frost, known to her worshipers as Lady Icekiss or the Brittle Maiden. Blades of ice grow out of her body at odd angles, breaking

off before they get too long. Her eyes burn with a cold blue light, a thin cloak of mist forms around her, and when she moves, her body crackles.

Auril's final form is a three-foot-diameter ice diamond containing the lesser god's divine spark. This hovering diamond has facets and a sharp point at the bottom, and her most ardent followers call it the Queen of Frozen Tears.

Concept artist Kieran Yanner was tasked with bringing life to those three distinct forms (and a few other inhabitants of this frozen climate), before cover artists Tyler Jacobson and Hydro74 offered their stunning interpretations of Auril. We spoke with all three artists to get their take on this frosty entity.

Concept Art, Kieran Yanner

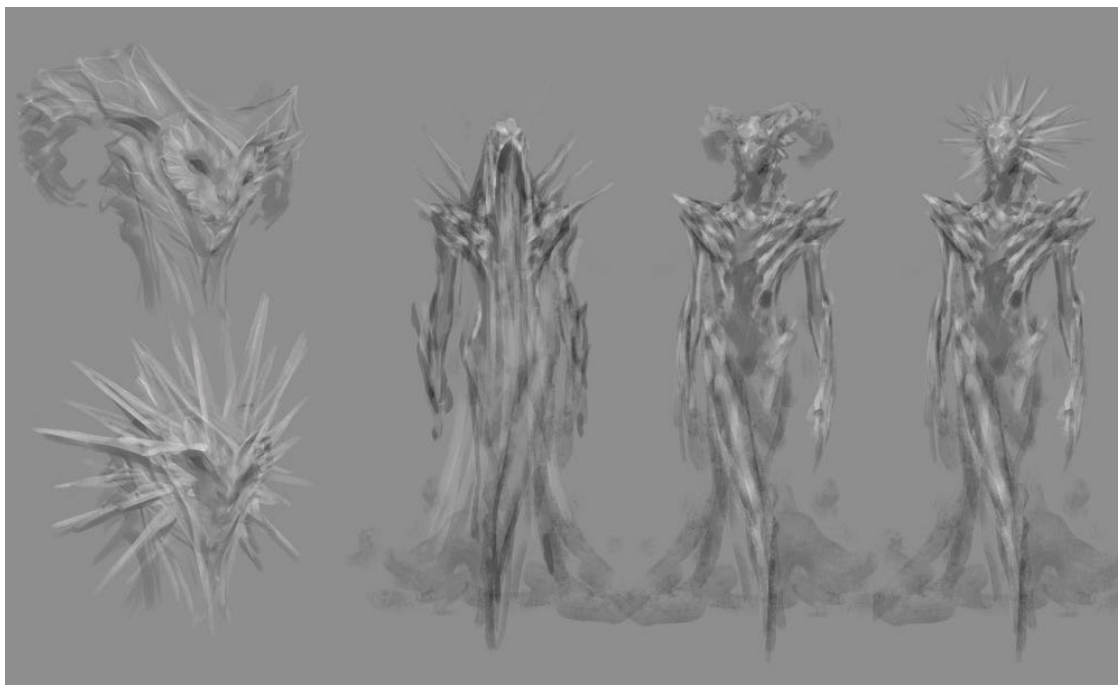
“I was brought in as a concept artist for *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. I worked on the frost druids, the Ten-Towners, and the tomb tapper—I was pleasantly surprised they went with the latter, because my style tends more towards Japanese horror, using a combination of uncomfortable textures and abstract shapes. I was worried the tomb tapper was *too* gross.

“Good concept work in general thinks about where a creature or character exists and uses elements of the land. I did a version of the Ten-Towners that were thinner and looked like Viking fishermen. It felt right to give them more of a natural, rounded look for the habitat, as opposed to simply slapping some furs on a standard character.



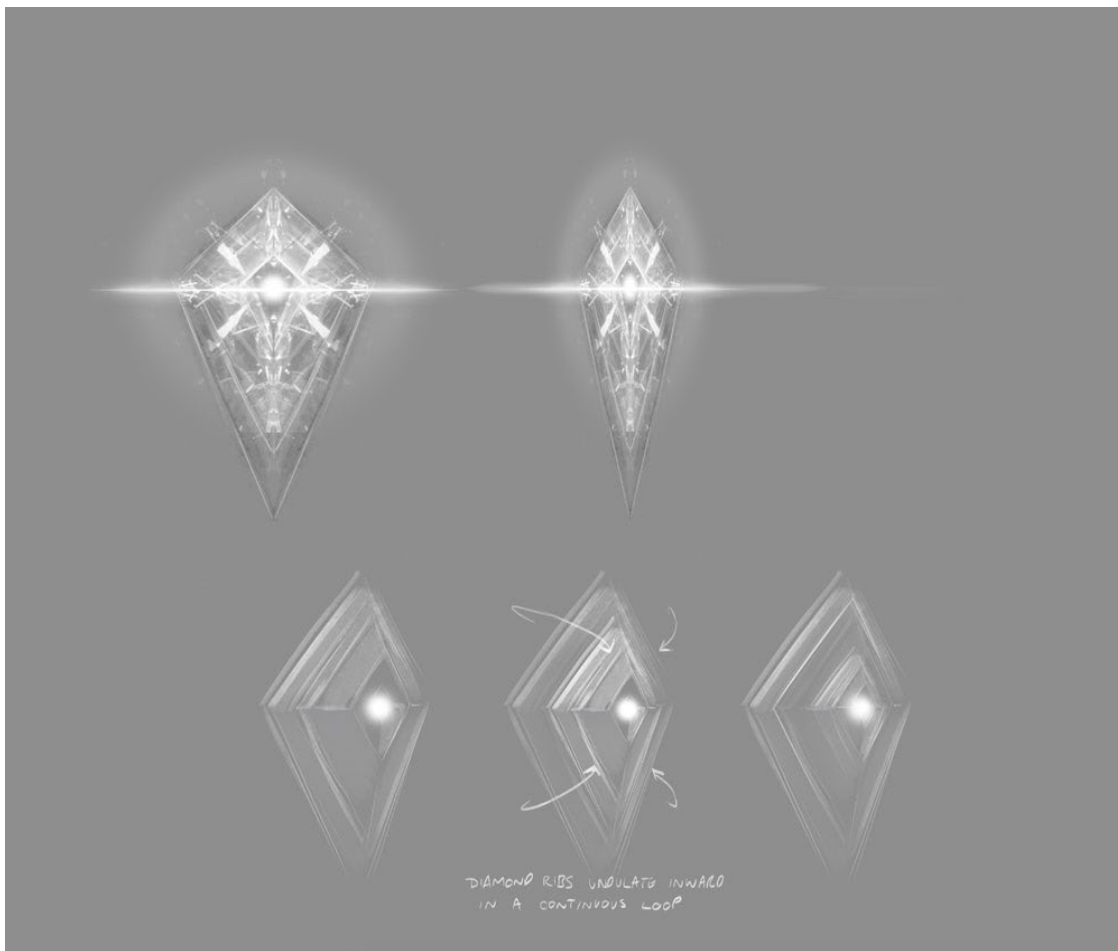
Auril Concept 1 (select to view)

“I also did the concepts for Auril’s cultists and Auril herself. The description of Auril mentioned her three distinct forms, so that element was already established before we began the artistic process. As you can see from my initial interpretation, she was much taller and lankier as I wanted to see this towering figure coming through the snowdrifts. I was basing that on Scandinavian mythology and imagery that I’ve seen. A musician called Fever Ray [the alias of one half of the electronic music duo The Knife, real name Karin Dreijer] uses a lot of old, creepy Scandinavian visuals in her music videos and I took some inspiration from those.



Auril Concept 2 (select to view)

“I often collect images to create a reference pack and work from that. I initially took Auril’s owl form through different iterations using the same elements. These all had horns of some description and you can see that some of these we tried out are distinctly different, as I used an ibex and different types of goats as reference. The version of Auril’s first form that we went with has a hunched, monstrous look. She doesn’t have a staff in the final version of that form, although her cloak can transform into an owl’s wings when she sees fit.



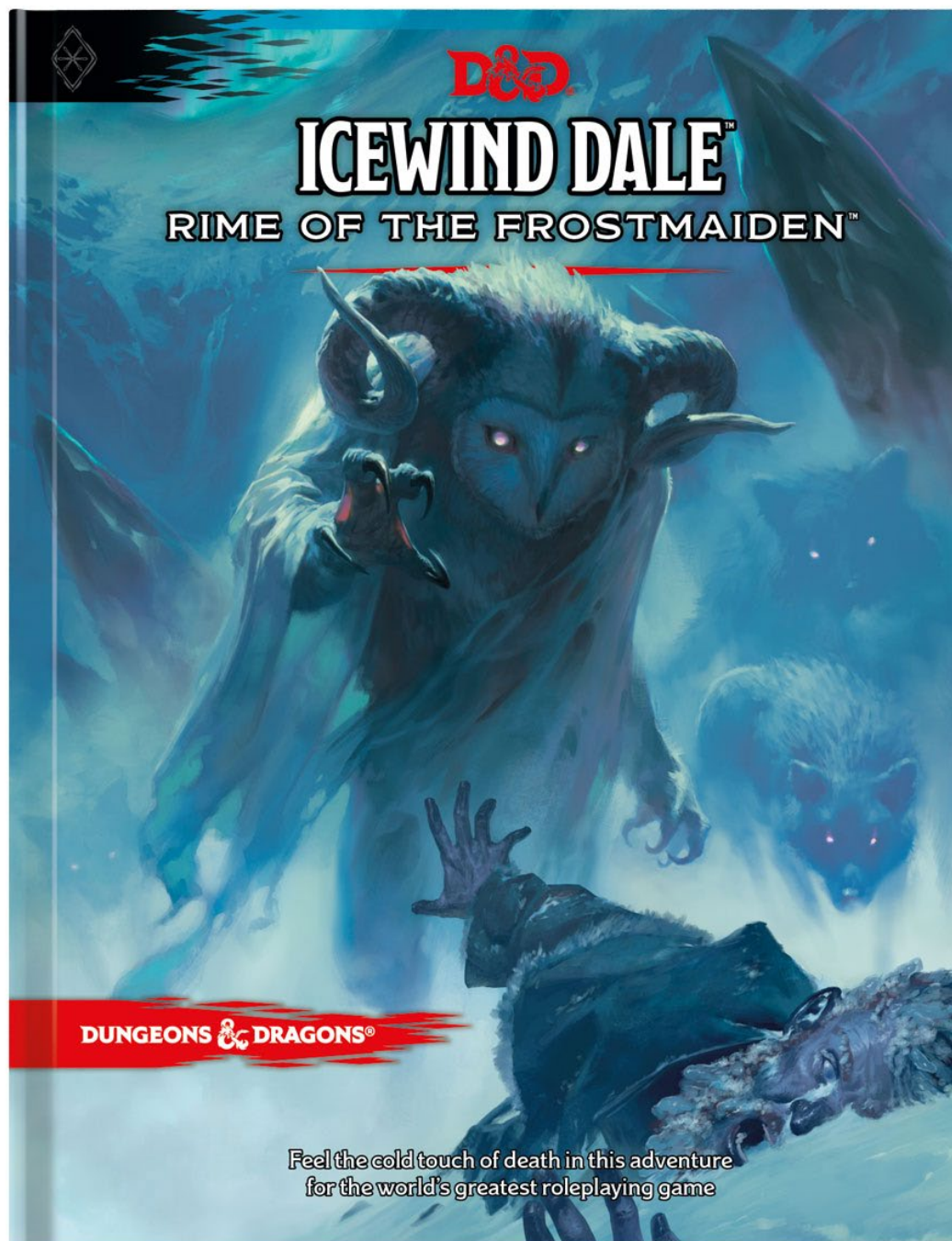
Auril Concept 3 (select to view)

“The intent behind the shard-like form is that when you look at it, it’s undulating like a kaleidoscope. This diamond shape that keeps colliding in on itself is a little like the structures Tilda Swinton’s Ancient One creates in *Doctor Strange*, with shapes and forms spiraling in on themselves like a Mandelbrot visual. I even included a little diagram so you can see how the shards and the diamond pattern was meant to repeat itself. It keeps becoming the minimalist core of what Auril represents, this pure god-like abstraction.”

Original Cover, Tyler Jacobson

“Once the D&D Team has completed the initial campaign development on a project such as *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, the art director will get a feel for what they want the cover to look like and they’ll come to me. In this case there was a discussion about which of Auril’s three different forms we would see on the cover. I was handed Kieran Yanner’s concept artwork and our option was to go with either the owl form or the crystalline form.

Because of the vibe the adventure is going for, we decided to double down on the horror.



The original cover (select to view)

“A lot of my recent covers for Dungeons & Dragons books have had a movie-poster style. *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* uses what they would call a ‘head stack’ in the movie poster industry. Auril’s first form is inherently much creepier, and a freaky owl with horns makes for a better scary movie poster as we tried to capture that horror feel.

“When we first talked about the setting of Icewind Dale, it evoked one of my favorite movies of all time: *The Thing*. The poster for John Carpenter’s film is pretty crazy. It’s freaky and stylized, with light coming out of the character’s face. I wanted to bring that same uneasiness to this scene of the frozen north.

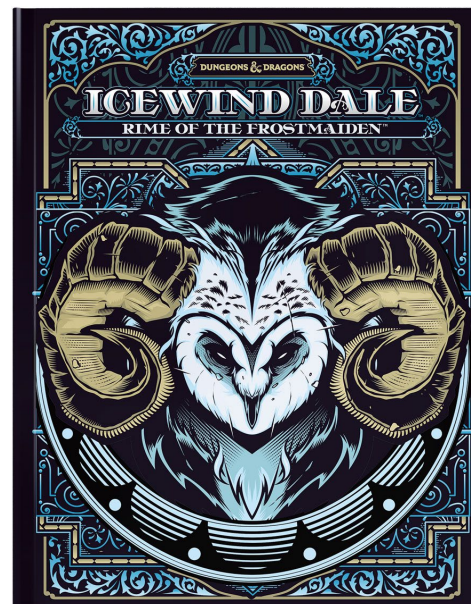
“Luckily, that palette of green and pale blues is pretty spooky. When you get into those really icy blues, there’s something chilling about it. Maybe we’re hardwired to feel the cold? That was fun to play with. Backlighting the image also helps make it spooky and is a neat trick to bring that kind of imagery through.

“As for the character lying face down in the snow, their identity has been left open and ambiguous. Personally, I think we’re seeing an adventurer who has failed in his mission and been frozen in terror. And Auril is coming out of the mist with her minions to claim him as her prize.

“A lot of people also ask about the little chwinga on the back cover. He’s standing there watching, his eyes glowing inside his mask. The joke in my house is that he’s a little guy named Dale. He’s Icewind Dale!”

Alternative Cover, Hydro74

“When Art Director Kate Irwin first approached me with the brief for the alt cover of *Rime of the Frostmaiden*, the idea was to feature the chardalyn ice dragon. I started work on the cover using the dragon as the main subject so Kate and I could figure out the best way to make it look cool. As we were awaiting feedback on the rough sketches, I flicked through the brief once more and saw Auril the Frostmaiden.



The alternative cover (select to view)

“Early on in my career my logo was an owl, so I took an instant

like to Auril's first form. An owl with ram horns? It doesn't get any more badass than that! I sent Kate a roughly drawn snowy owl and the response was, 'We love it! We're doing that one.'

"This is one of the fastest covers I've ever created. Whereas we were slow to find a good concept for the chardalyn dragon, once we pivoted towards Auril's first form it was boom, boom, boom. We did a few revisions to the image on the back cover, but that was it. When I heard back a few days later it had been approved, which was very rewarding. It helped that this felt like something I was personally familiar with. I think mentally I already had this image visually prepared.



Front and back covers (select to view)

"Shauna Narciso taught me to always reference a good color tone, and this piece has some very cool tones. Instantly you realize it needs to be blue to be in keeping with the environment of Icewind Dale. For some reason, blue, white, and gold work really well together. They have this expensive quality to them that catches people's eyes. It's not like we could have done reds or similar colors anyway. This is winter!"

"Tyler Jacobson did a phenomenal job with the original cover image and that gave me a great reference. There's a real sense of beauty there but also a menacing quality to Auril. Her head is tilted and that

accentuates her horns and the way her hands are reaching out. My work is drastically different to the art that's inside the book and on the original cover but when they send me a large version of those images it's nice to zoom in and find the little details. I try and get some of those subtleties in there, so hopefully by the same token the original artist looks at my work and says, 'Not bad.'"



INTERIOR ART

"We'd be remiss if we didn't mention the stellar work Graphic Designer Trish Yochum contributed to *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. The page design is something we're very proud of. From top down, corner to corner, it's a piece of art," says Chris

Perkins. “Trish’s work is the art that supports everything else,” adds Kate Irwin, “her palette was beautiful and she did an amazing job. Every time I’d get new pages from her it was hugely exciting.” “I was the same,” continues Perkins. “I’d immediately drop everything and look to see what Trish had assembled. She’s made Icewind Dale look and feel colder and more magical.”

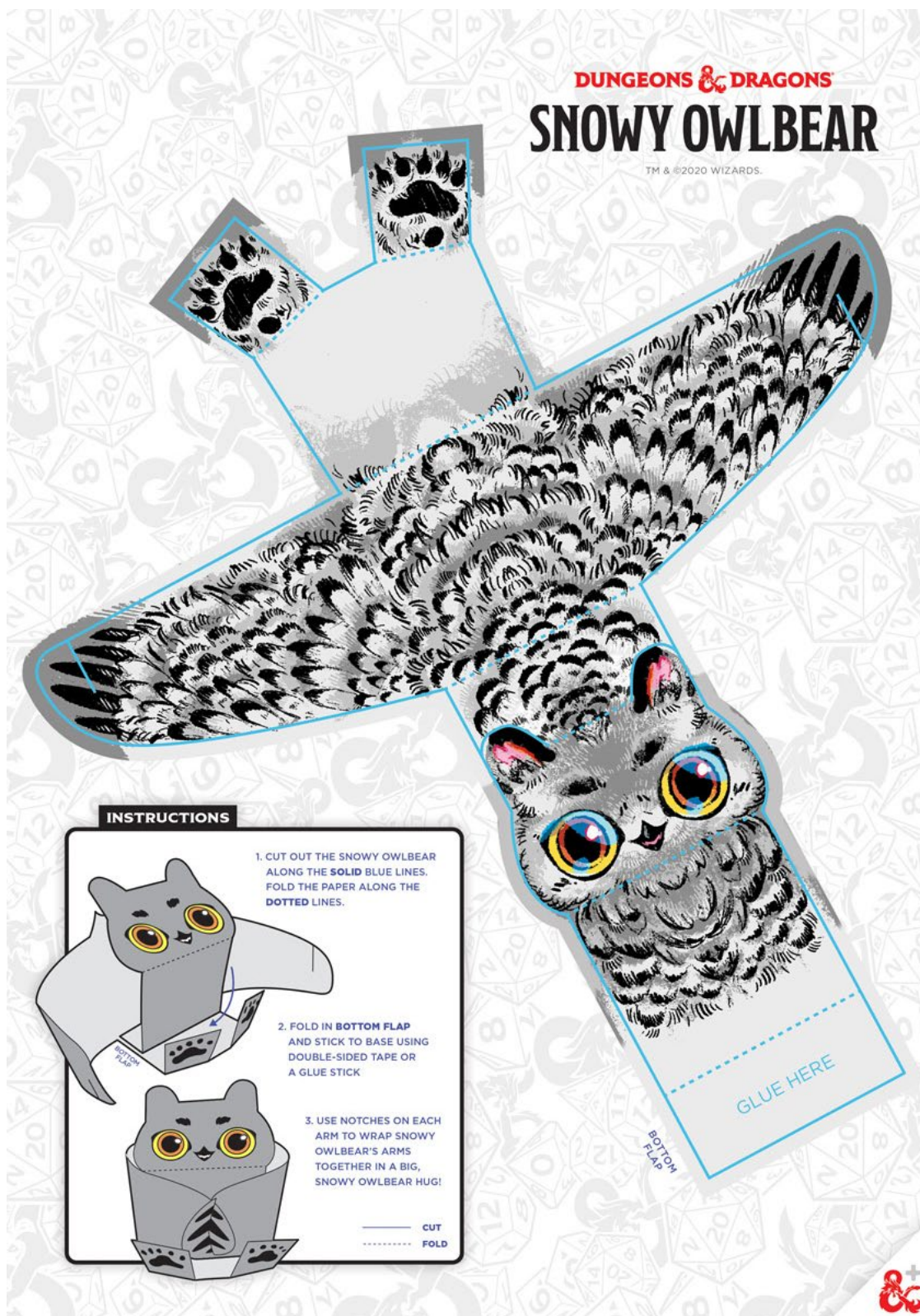
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Cut-Out-And-Keep Snowy Owlbear

Some assembly required! Break out the safety scissors and a glue stick, and build your very own Icewind Dale owlbear.

When the team at *Dragon+* got its first look at *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, it was still known by its codename “Avalanche”. But it wasn’t a mass of snow, ice, and rocks falling rapidly down a mountainside that swept us off our feet, it was the art for April Prime’s amazing snowy owlbear!



We were lucky enough to showcase that art on our **Issue #32 cover** and that got us thinking: what's the cutest version of this cross between a snowy owl and a polar bear that we could possibly create? The answer lay in our incredible **cut-out-and-keep version** of the Vanthampur family's pet tressym Slobberchops from *Baldur's Gate: Descent Into Avernus*.

Emi Tanji packed her innate sense of fun into that project and she once again brings her love of everything cute to our cut-out-and-keep snowy owlbear! Please print, snip, stick, and enjoy your own personal figure using Emi's template, which you can download below.

[DOWNLOAD THE PDF](#)

You can connect with Emi Tanji on [Twitter](#) and help her raise money for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals via [her Extra Life page](#).



THREE KOBOLDS IN A TRENCHCOAT

Emi Tanji has also designed an amazing image for this year's [D&D Extra Life 2020 apparel](#), raising money for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. A similar trio of duplicitous kobolds can also be found in *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.



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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®]

SNOWY OWLBEAR

TM & ©2020 WIZARDS.

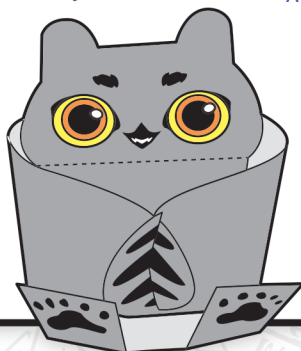
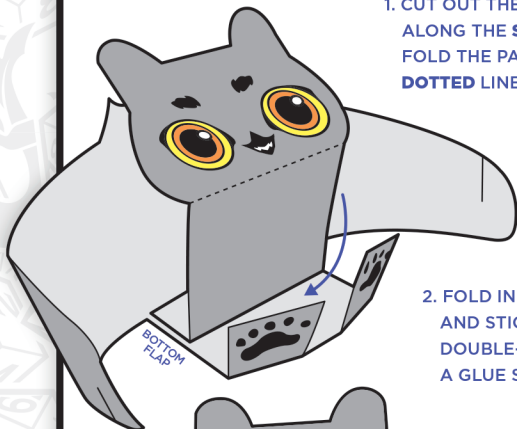
INSTRUCTIONS

1. CUT OUT THE SNOWY OWLBEAR ALONG THE **SOLID BLUE LINES**. FOLD THE PAPER ALONG THE **DOTTED LINES**.

2. FOLD IN **BOTTOM FLAP** AND STICK TO BASE USING DOUBLE-SIDED TAPE OR A GLUE STICK

3. USE NOTCHES ON EACH ARM TO WRAP SNOWY OWLBEAR'S ARMS TOGETHER IN A BIG, SNOWY OWLBEAR HUG!

——— CUT
----- FOLD



GLUE HERE

BOTTOM FLAP



Streaming Highlights

Kingdom management, entertaining character builds, and mythic monsters are among this issue's video highlights.



NIGHTS OF EVENINGSTAR

The cast of *D&D Presents: T.O.R.C.H.* is so eager to play Dungeons & Dragons that they've rolled up new characters and co-opted *High Rollers* Dungeon Master Mark Hulmes to lead them in an adventure. *Nights of Eveningstar* sees Mica Burton, Jonathan Indovino, Anna Prosser, and Nathan Sharp navigating a twelve-week campaign set in the kingdom of Cormyr. Hulmes pitched three ideas for tales he wanted to tell and allowed the cast to choose the style of story they wanted to play.

"I've got a document where I collect ideas that I have on the back burner, and I gave them a choice of three possible campaigns. One was an Eberron-based game called *The Watch*, which would see them

operating as a *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*-style force solving crimes in Sharn, City of Towers. Another was more of a horror-themed adventure set in one of the spookier locations in the Forgotten Realms, with a mystery feel to compliment that creepy vibe,” he recalls.

“The third option, which everyone agreed sounded fun, is a campaign I’ve wanted to run for a while: kingdom management. The players get a keep and some lands and have to decide which buildings get built, how many military units are created, and what the politics of the region are. Since it is based in the Forgotten Realms, I realized that Cormyr would be a perfect setting. That really leapt off the page for everyone and they immediately started getting character ideas.”

When Hulmes asked the cast if they had any other requests for the campaign, the overwhelming response was that they wanted to start the game as 7th-level characters.

“This is a wonderful mix of what the players decided would be fun and what fits the story. Many players feel that they never get to play at high level because most one-shots and streamed games tend to start at lower levels and build up. Yet these characters are meant to be experienced enough to take on this position of power. If you look at the tiers of play in D&D, a 7th -level character would be the right tier to be the Baron or Baroness of the region and command all of these knights. I don’t think it would make as much sense to have a 3rd-level character in that role,” he explains.

Your browser can't play this video.

[Learn more](#)

Nights of Eveningstar streams live on Tuesdays at 4pm PT/7pm EST on the **official D&D Twitch channel**.

TULOK THE BARBRARIAN

The *Building Character* series by Tulok the Barbrarian—a portmanteau of librarian and barbarian—shows players how to incorporate their favorite fictional heroes (and villains!) into fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons. This isn’t some broad strokes build, barely capturing a character’s main features. Each creation highlights the key elements of the subject and then looks at the best way to bring them to life. From pop-culture figures as diverse as *Friday the 13th*’s **Jason Voorhees** and Stephen King’s **Pennywise** to comic-book character **Harley Quinn** and video game icon **Sonic the Hedgehog**, the range of builds is impressive.

Tulok (also known as Phil Allen) begins every build by listing character goals. That might be simple for someone such as Puss in Boots (be a cat, stab things), but for more intricate characters such as Spider-Man things get a little more complicated.

“It’s like finishing a Sudoku puzzle, where the abilities of the character that have a direct equivalent in fifth edition are the set numbers, and I structure everything else around those,” he tells Dragon+.

Tulok’s most popular build is Jotaro Kujo, and creating that *Jojo*’s *Bizarre Adventure* character singlehandedly boosted the entire *Building Character* YouTube channel. Kujo’s build cobbles together a Path of the Ancestral Guardian barbarian, a monk of the Way of the Open Hand, and a Battle Master fighter. The build was completed shortly before the **Way of the Astral Self monk** was released in *Unearthed Arcana*.

“That’s happened a few other times since then. I’ll create a multiclassing, Frankenstein-esque abomination, only for *UA* to come out a week or two later simplifying it. Obviously, I’m an inspiration to the authors,” he jokes.

Jotaro Kujo’s introduction to fifth edition may have boosted Tulok’s

ratings but his favorite build is for the 2D sprites from the Nintendo platform game *Ice Climber*. Their creation takes advantage of the **Echo Knight** fighter from *Explorer's Guide to Wildemount*.

“Since the Ice Climbers don’t really have an established lore, I figured I could use that as an opportunity to push the Echo Knight as far as it can go. The fact that these chibi-mountaineers hit harder than someone like DC Comics villain **Doomsday** is really funny to me,” he says, revealing that the weirdest request he gets involves a TV journalist.

“A build for Anderson Cooper is regularly requested, possibly because he talked about being a fan of D&D in an interview with Stephen Colbert. Within the first five minutes of every video being posted, the same person comments asking for an Anderson Cooper build. Maybe I’ll reward them one day for their sheer grit and determination. Although it might set a bad precedent to indulge this request, and I also don’t know what it would do to someone to see their quixotic quest achieved!”

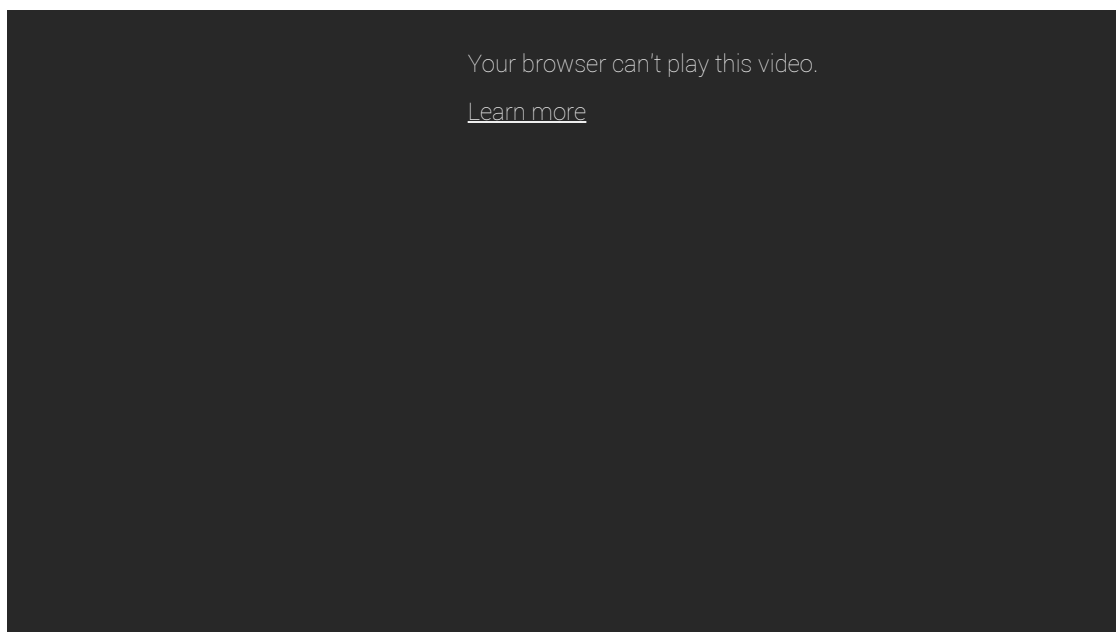
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[Learn more](#)

MYTHIC ENCOUNTERS IN THEROS

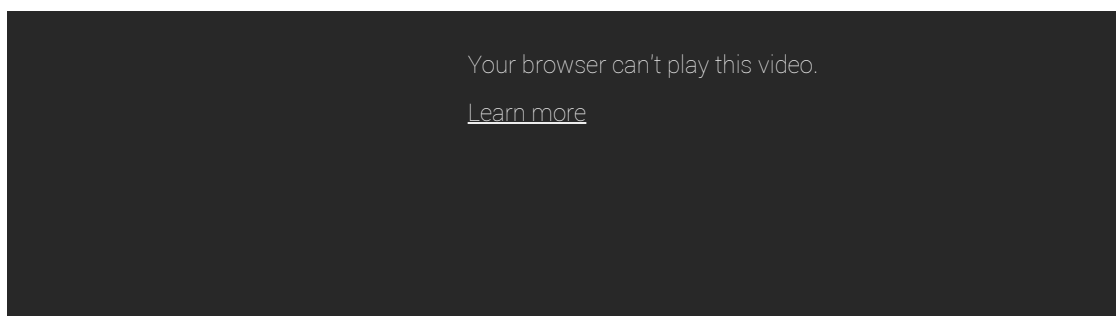
“I know the Theros setting quite well,” says Trick Jarrett, who worked on *Magic: The Gathering* before adding Dungeons & Dragons to his duties, “but this idea actually came about because I wanted to run high-level one-shots. They’re one of those things not a

lot of D&D fans get to play. We wanted those people to see epic boss battles without their home games needing to reach that point or having to view maybe 100 episodes of a live-play game.”



Originally, the idea was for high-level parties to take on the greatest D&D monsters. When *Mythic Odysseys of Theros* took the *M: TG* setting and created it for fifth edition D&D, its new “mythic” monsters became the obvious foes to fight, as large monstrosity Hythonia, huge monstrosity Arasta, and gargantuan monstrosity (titan) Tromokratis have a particularly nifty trick that gives encounters a cinematic feel.

“The comeback mechanic for mythic monsters means parties believe they’ve defeated this big boss, only to say, ‘Wait, the health bar is going back up! What’s going on? Oh no, I have to do it all over again!’” Jarrett says, although the epic nature of the encounter wasn’t one-sided. “There was a theme in the Tromokratis fight where we had a triton sea ranger facing a sea monster, so I made sure that character had an *arrow of slaying* for sea monsters.”





Having helped to create three of the toughest fights currently available to D&D parties (with the aid of DMs Kate Welch, James Wyatt, and Chris Lindsay), Jarrett learned a few tips to make future high-level encounters deliver even bigger thrills.

“In a high-level game there are a lot of player and magic item abilities to keep track of. To help the game run more smoothly, I made a standard character sheet for each player, then created a separate document that listed all of their various abilities and skills. Because it’s a one-shot, the players may not have had time to familiarize themselves with the abilities as much as they would in a campaign where they’ve lived with that character for a long time. By creating that easy reference, I was able to say, ‘Don’t forget you have this static ability’, or ‘Remember these extra resistances’,” he suggests.

“One of my other big takeaways from this project was the benefit of building in additional challenge points for the players. In the Tromokratis episode, they focused on fighting the gargantuan mythic monster itself—whereas James chipped away at some of the player abilities as they were approaching Hythonia, while Chris threw in more spiders and a few other distracting challenges. Unless the players are really outgunned in terms of their character level, it’s wise to employ some extra monsters to put more pressure on them. Otherwise, these high-level characters have so many tools at their disposal to give them the opportunity to pull off a surprise haymaker.

“It also matters where you set the fight, as lair actions would also aid these monsters. *Mythic Odysseys of Theros* doesn’t define lair actions for Arasta, Hythonia, or Tromokratis, but there’s nothing to stop a DM figuring out how those would work.”

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[Learn more](#)

DUNGEON CROSSING

Dungeons & Dragons can already bring the cute when it needs to. Looking for a cuteness overload? How about D&D... but make it *Animal Crossing*!

DM Tanya DePass invites **Gary Whitta** (Marenghi the Paladin), **Shannon Woodward** (Barb the Barbarian), **Brian Gray** (Arkhn the Bard), and **Adam Nickerson** (Smoop the, um, other Bard) to her island to teach them how to play D&D. Collectively known as The Order of the Sunfish, they embark on their first quest to the Mountain's Toe Gold Mine. Will they find glory and riches? Or will intra-party tensions be their undoing? *Dragon+* chatted with DePass to find out how this amazing crossover was born.

What prompted you to use *Animal Crossing* to teach people to play D&D?

Tanya DePass: I was a guest on Gary Whitta's *Animal Talking*—a talk show taking place in *Animal Crossing*—with fellow *Rival [of Waterdeep]* Brandon Stennis. We got to talking about nerdy things, and Gary mentioned that he'd never learned to play D&D. I said I could teach him, and then the question was... what if we did it in *Animal Crossing*!? The idea of *Dungeon Crossing* came from that. Adam Nickerson who works with Gary on *Animal Talking* asked if he could join, and I asked my friend Brian Gray if he wanted in. As we tweeted about it, Shannon Woodward (*Westworld*, *The Last of Us* 2) asked if she could join too, so we brought her in.

Did you need anything additional to make it work?

I had to make a Dodo code for them to visit the island, and only give it to them so no-one else popped in by accident. And we hopped into a Discord call so we could hear each other.

Would you recommend *Animal Crossing* as a good meeting place?

Absolutely. You can hang out, swim, sit around a campfire, buy timers, and chase each other with axes, I mean nets. We did realize after that first session that we'd need to be able to see each other, since there was a lot of cross talk. We added a Zoom call for the second episode so we could read the room, as it were.

How easy was it and how much time did it take to craft that awesome gaming room?

It was a little effort to change my basement into a game room with a table and chairs. I already had the table with the ampersand tablecloth in my house, I just had to make two chairs. I also customized paper stacks to make them look like 5e character sheets. Some of the décor was community sourced, like the flooring and the jungle wallpaper. I already had most of the other material.

Did you import the *Rivals of Waterdeep* poster into *Animal Crossing* or create it?

That was thanks to [JBrooksDev on Twitter](#).

Can we expect this to become a regular thing, with more upcoming episodes?

That's the hope! We've had some clashing commitments but the plan is Saturdays 10am Pacific/11am Mountain/12pm Central/1pm Eastern as a squad stream on [my Twitch channel](#) and on [Gary Whitta's channel](#).

Your browser can't play this video.

[Learn more](#)



BALDUR'S GATE 3: PANEL FROM HELL

Game developer Larian Studios used a special online panel to reveal that hugely-anticipated video game *Baldur's Gate III* is finally coming to Early Access next month. Hosted by Summer Game Fest's Geoff Keighley and featuring Larian's Creative Director Swen Vincke, Senior Writer Adam Smith, and D&D Lead Story Designer Chris Perkins, the “*Panel From Hell*” confirmed that the game is now slated to enter Early Access for PC and Stadia on 30 September. It also unveiled the game's full opening cinematic.

Dragon+ has **already previewed BG3**, which sees squid ship-faring mind flayers implanting unfortunate citizens with icky ‘tadpoles’ that seek to turn their hosts into new illithids, but the full cinematic reveals another wrinkle—players begin their adventure in the hellish setting of Avernus, where devils and demons clash in the endless Blood War.

Once they find their way back to Faerûn, players can enjoy more than twenty hours of Early Access content: exploring iconic locations such as the Underdark; encountering monsters such as the terrifying, tunneling bulette; progressing to 4th level, and meeting a huge cast of characters—some of whom can be recruited into your adventuring party.

“In Early Access, there are five companions that you can recruit during your journey,” says Adam Smith. “There’s Wyll, a human warlock; Shadowheart, a half-elf dark cleric on a mission from her goddess; the vampire spawn Astarion, a very unusual character with unique mechanics; Lae’zel, the githyanki warrior you see in *BG3*’s CGI intro; and Gale, a human wizard who has more things going wrong inside him than just the tadpole.”

“Depending on which companions you pick, you’ll get a completely

different experience,” Swen Vincke adds. “For instance, Shadowheart and Lae’zel can’t stand each other.”

The gaming community has been hyped for *Baldur’s Gate III* ever since it was **first announced in June 2019**, and the scope of the game’s Early Access build will only heighten expectations.

Comparing the early release versions of *BG3* and Larian’s 2017 hit *Divinity: Original Sin II*, studio boss Vincke explains that *BG3* will feature 80 combat situations to *DOS2*’s 22; 146 spells and actions to *DOS2*’s 69; 596 characters to *DOS2*’s 142; and a whopping 45,980 lines of dialogue to the 17,600 lines spoken in *DOS2*. Online multiplayer will also be supported, and more races, classes, and companions will be added throughout Early Access.

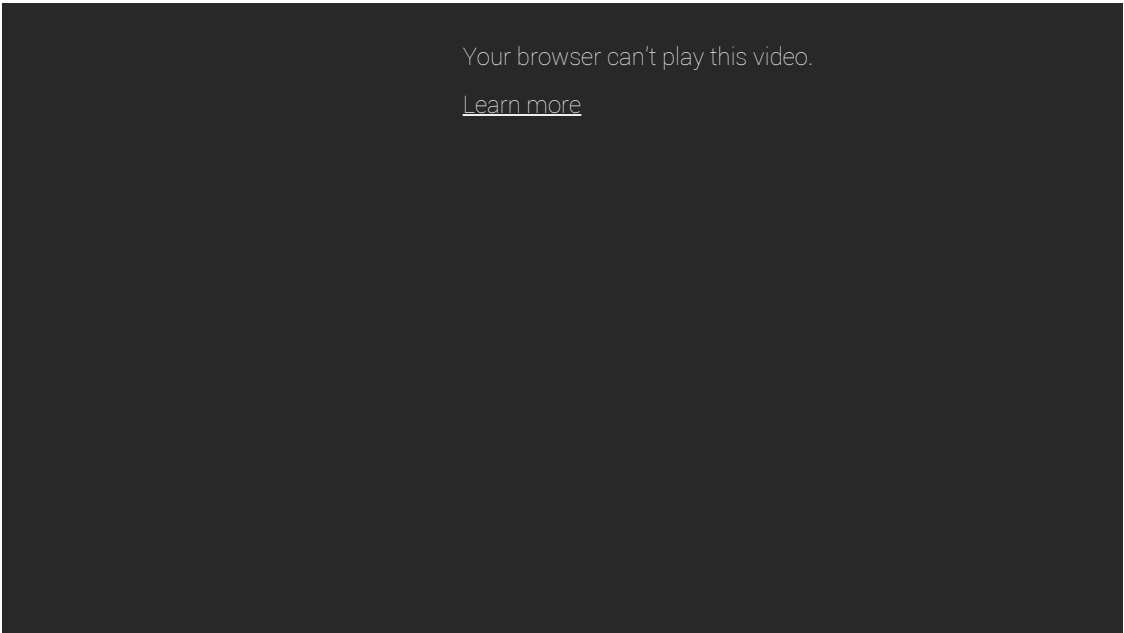
Smith suggests that the Early Access release offers players the chance to try out different play styles they might not usually embrace. “The metrics show us that most people tend to be good when they play CRPGs. If you play *BG3* in Early Access, you can use that as an excuse to do the bad things. I want you to be your worst versions of yourselves, because you may not encounter some of my favorite situations and characters in this game if you don’t try these evil routes. I beg of you, be evil just this once!”

Smith also confirms that *BG3* will feature romance options. “I don’t want to get into spoiler territory, but romance is a huge part of the game. The campsite gets a little hot at times! You’ll discover some of that in Early Access, too.”

The *Panel from Hell* also gave us a sneak peek at a couple of new creatures we might encounter during our travels. One impressive gameplay moment is the ‘lobotomy scene’, where players stumble upon a corpse with its brain exposed... only to discover that it’s actually a trapped intellect devourer. Another scene features the classic D&D critter, the owlbear, accompanied by an adorably fluffy cub. If you’ve always wanted a baby owlbear of your own, September can’t come soon enough!

“If you really, *really* play your cards right and get good dice rolls, you can recruit that owlbear cub into your camp,” says Vincke. “It can create quite a lot of havoc, though; if you also have a favorite pet dog in camp, you might wake up one morning to find that it has met

with a little accident!”



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Comic: Ravenloft

The stakes are high in this hilarious map capturing Barovia's battier side.

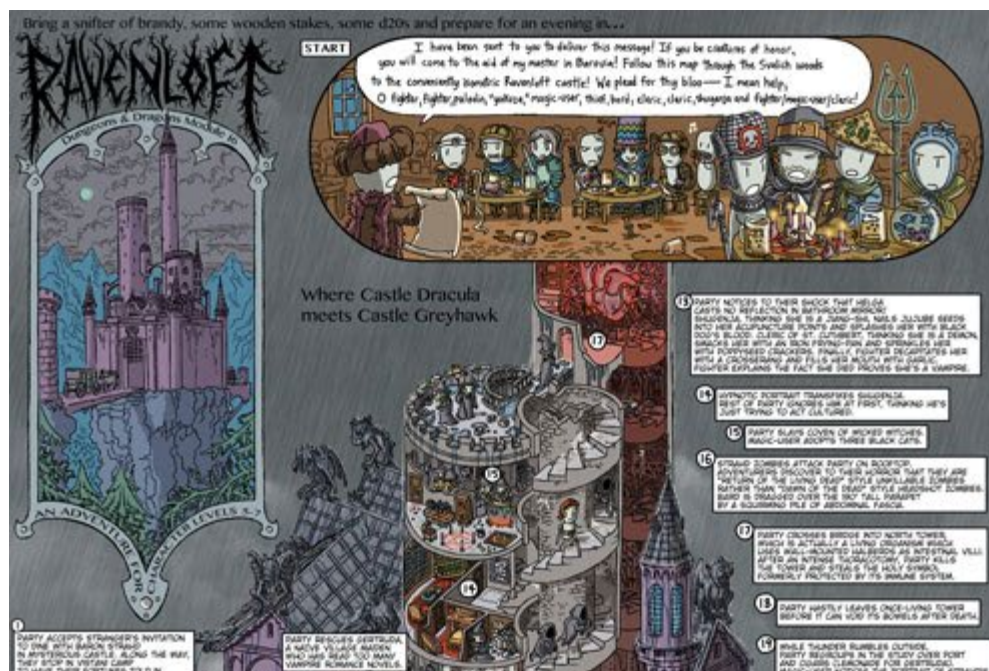
by Jason Thompson

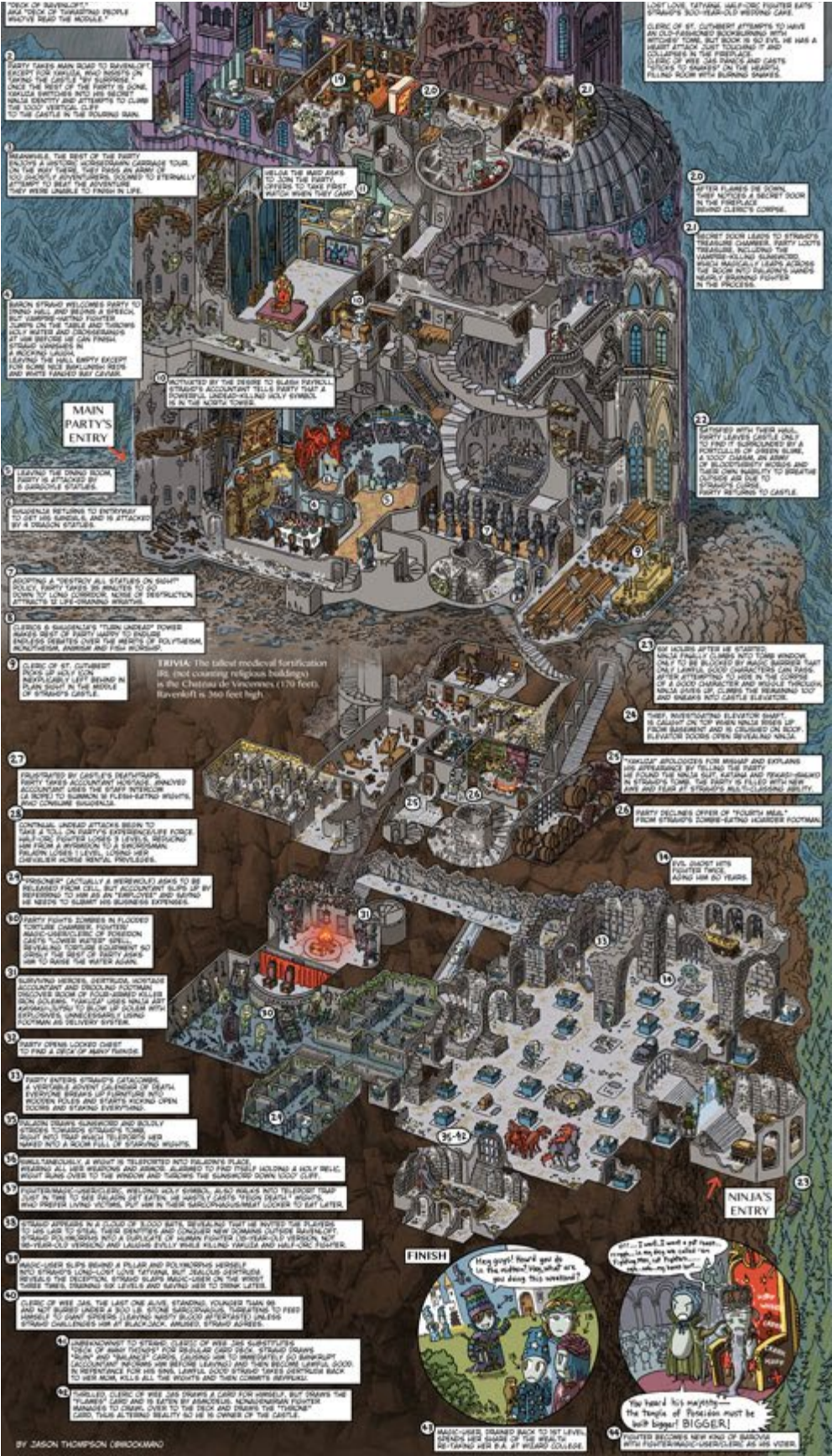
WARNING: THIS WALKTHROUGH MAP CONTAINS SPOILERS FOR THE CLASSIC DUNGEONS & DRAGONS MODULE *I6: RAVENLOFT*.

Comedy cartographer Jason Thompson must have cranked the playlist “Children of the Night (what sweet music they make!)” up to eleven when he created this indispensable guide to Castle Ravenloft.

Following a sizeable adventuring party through the classic Dungeons & Dragons module *I6*, Thompson shows us the space where comedy meets horror, where vampire movies meet ninja movies, and where Castle Dracula meets Castle Greyhawk.

First appearing in *Dragon+ Issue #6*, it’s reprinted here to celebrate the upcoming, newly updated fifth edition campaign, *Curse of Strahd Revamped*.





DOWNLOAD THE HIGH-RES HERE

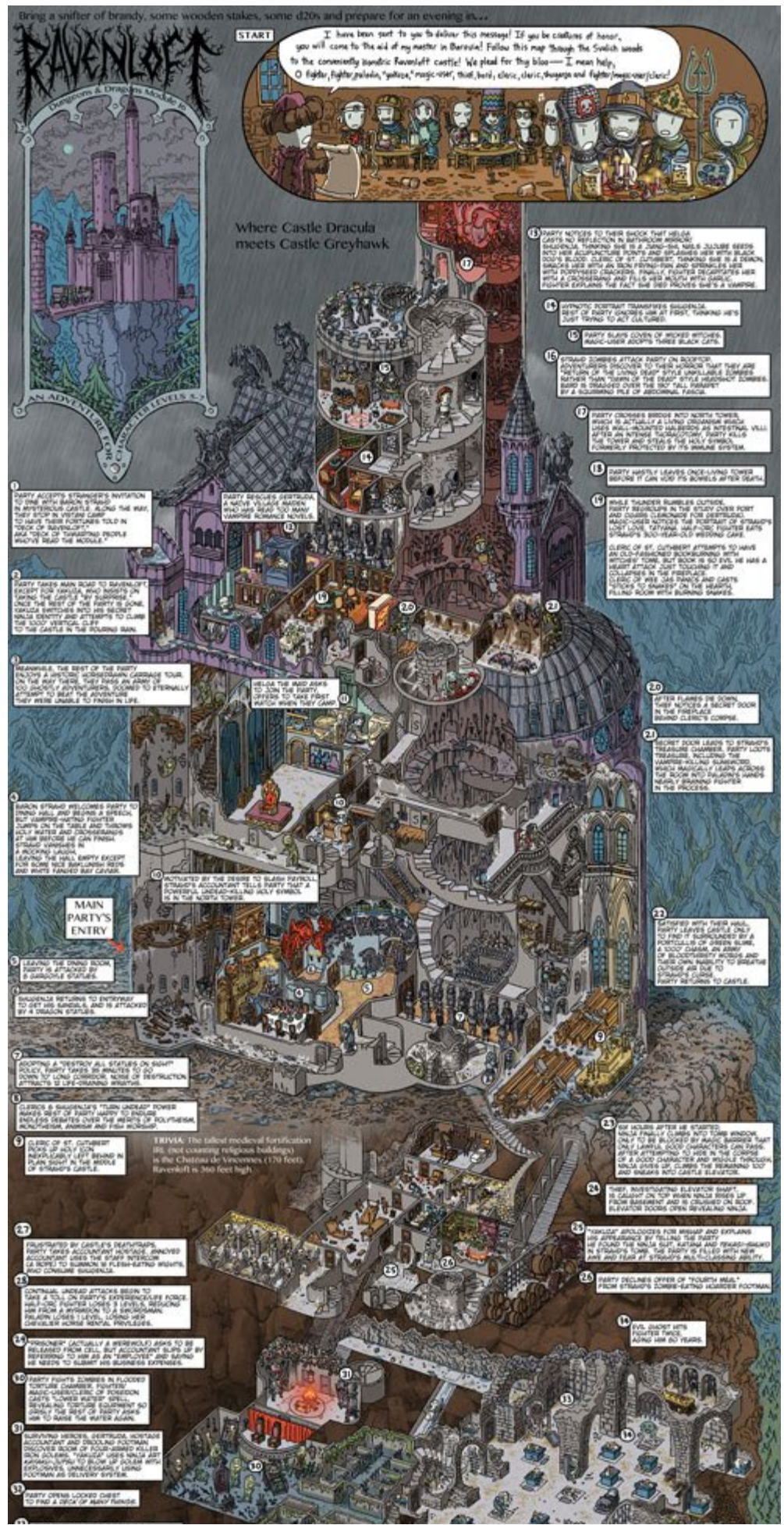
Curse of Strahd Revamped releases October 20, 2020 with an

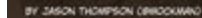
MSRP of \$99.99 and is available to **preorder now**.



“For every *Dracula* let there be *Love at First Bite*, a comedic spin on an otherwise horrific tale.”

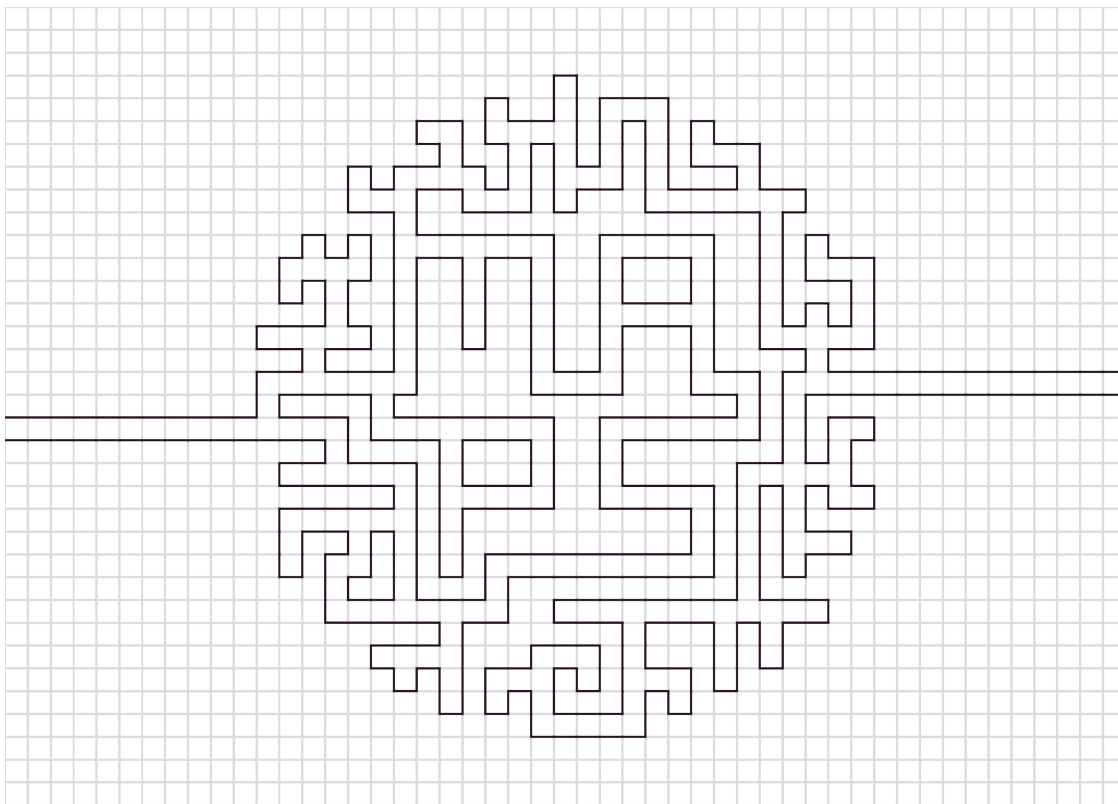
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Maps of the Month: Mythic Odysseys of Theros and Tales of The Yawning Portal

Whether it's an arena, race, or lava-filled death trap, we've got a map for you. Let the games begin!



WARNING: THESE MAPS MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS FOR MYTHIC ODYSSEYS OF THEROS, AND TALES OF THE YAWNING PORTAL.

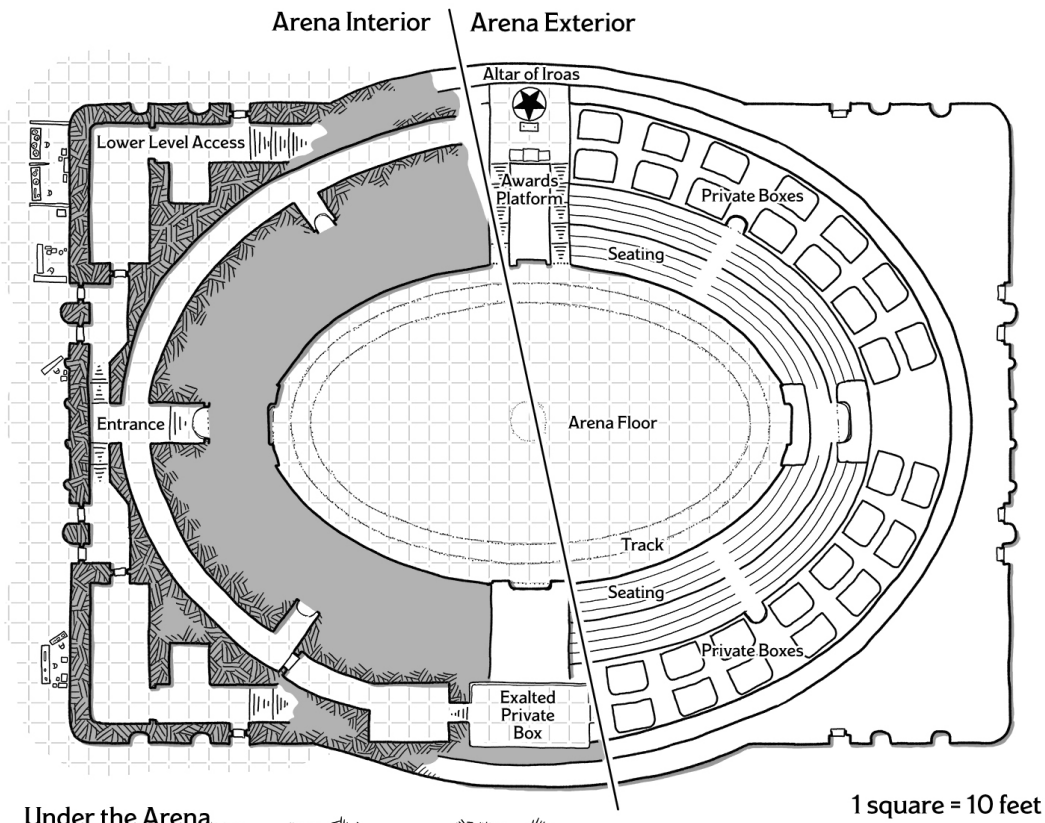
THE THEROS ARENA

On the previous page in *Dragon Classics* we looked at contests of

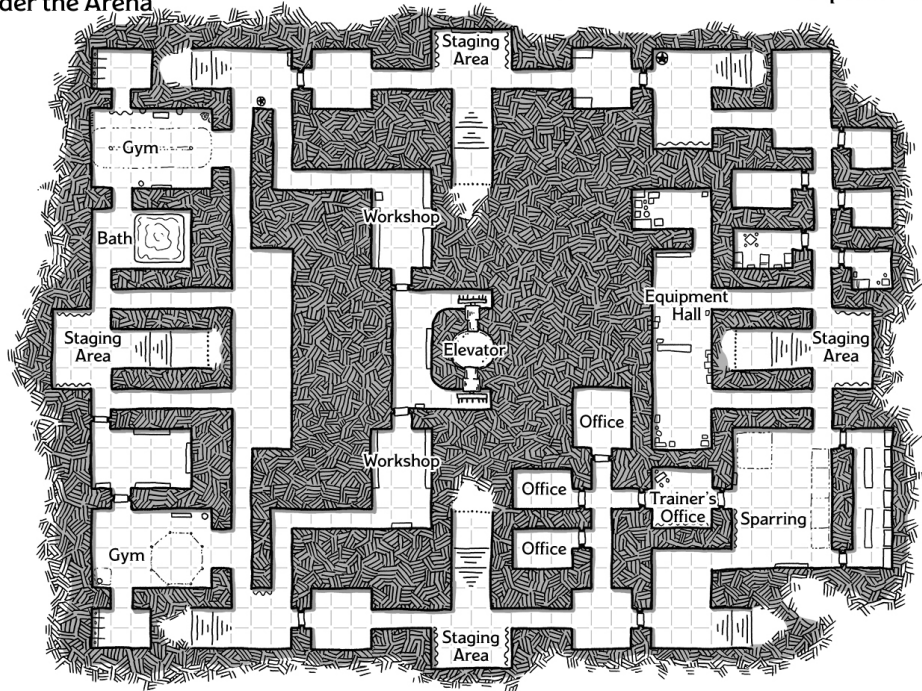
speed, and athleticism... and owlbear racing! Considering how the roots of the world of Theros lie in the myths of ancient Greece (including its Olympic games), it seemed an opportune time to showcase an arena from that setting.

As noted in *Mythic Odysseys of Theros*, such contest grounds host athletic competitions. The grandest hippodrome in Akros holds thousands of spectators, but more modest stadiums can be found throughout the land, serving as proving grounds for athletes and entertainment for the rich and poor. Foot and chariot races, hurling competitions, and combat sports (wrestling, boxing, and **pankration**) are all common events in Theros' arenas, especially during the annual Iroan Games, held in Akros.

Tagged



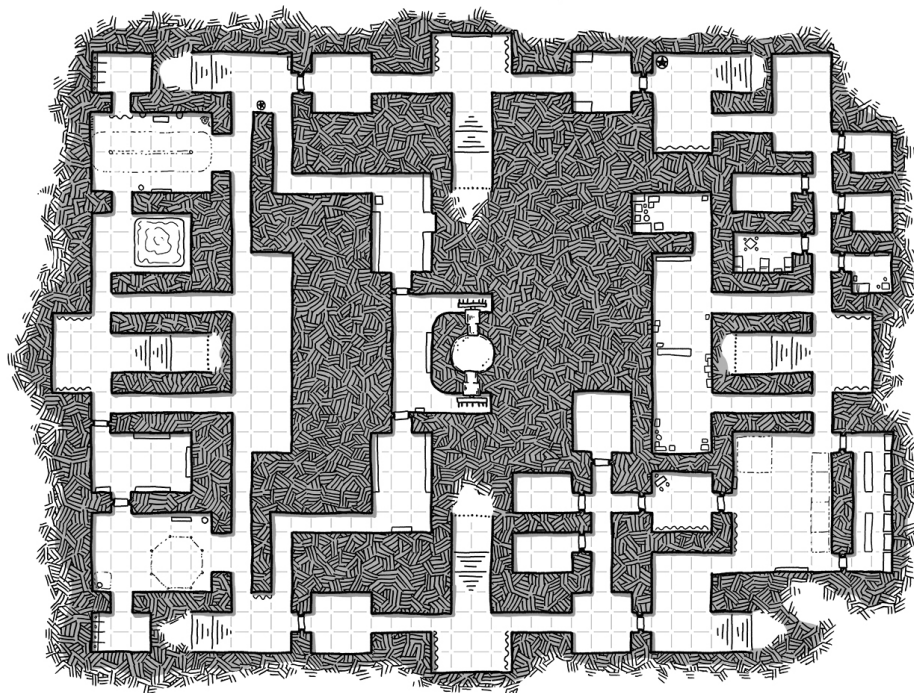
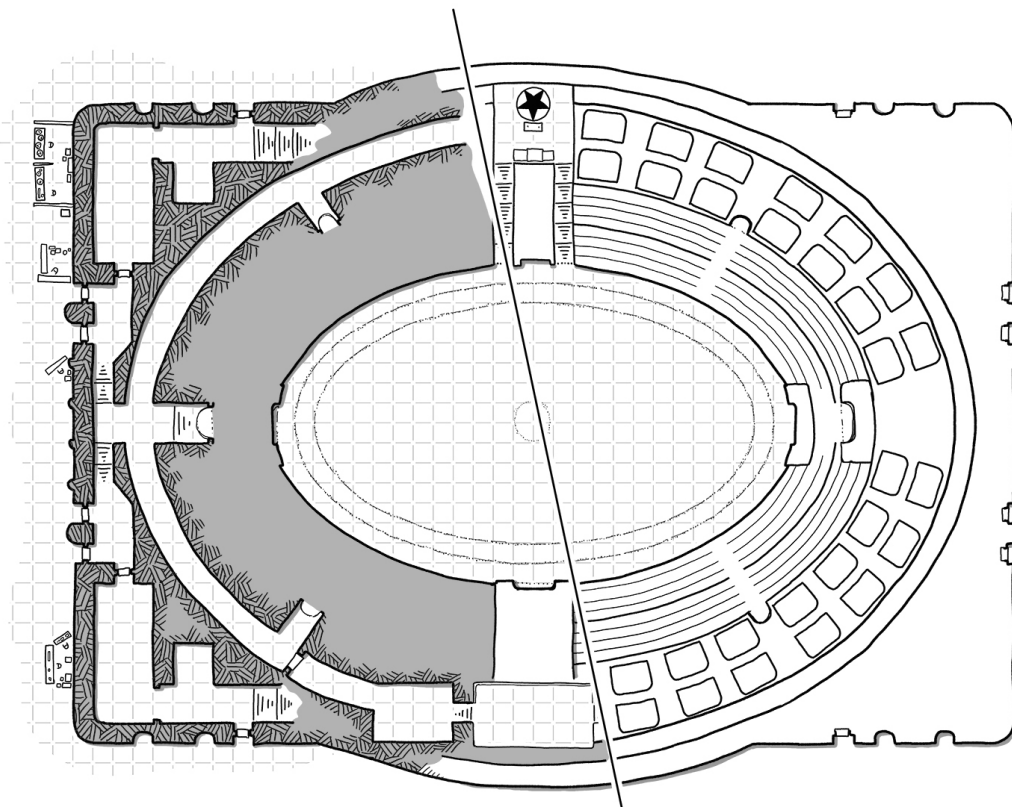
Under the Arena



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Untagged



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Mythic Odysseys of Theros released on July 21, 2020 with an MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your **local game store**, book stores such as **Barnes & Noble**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**, or find a digital version at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**. Plus, the ***Encounters in Theros*** companion

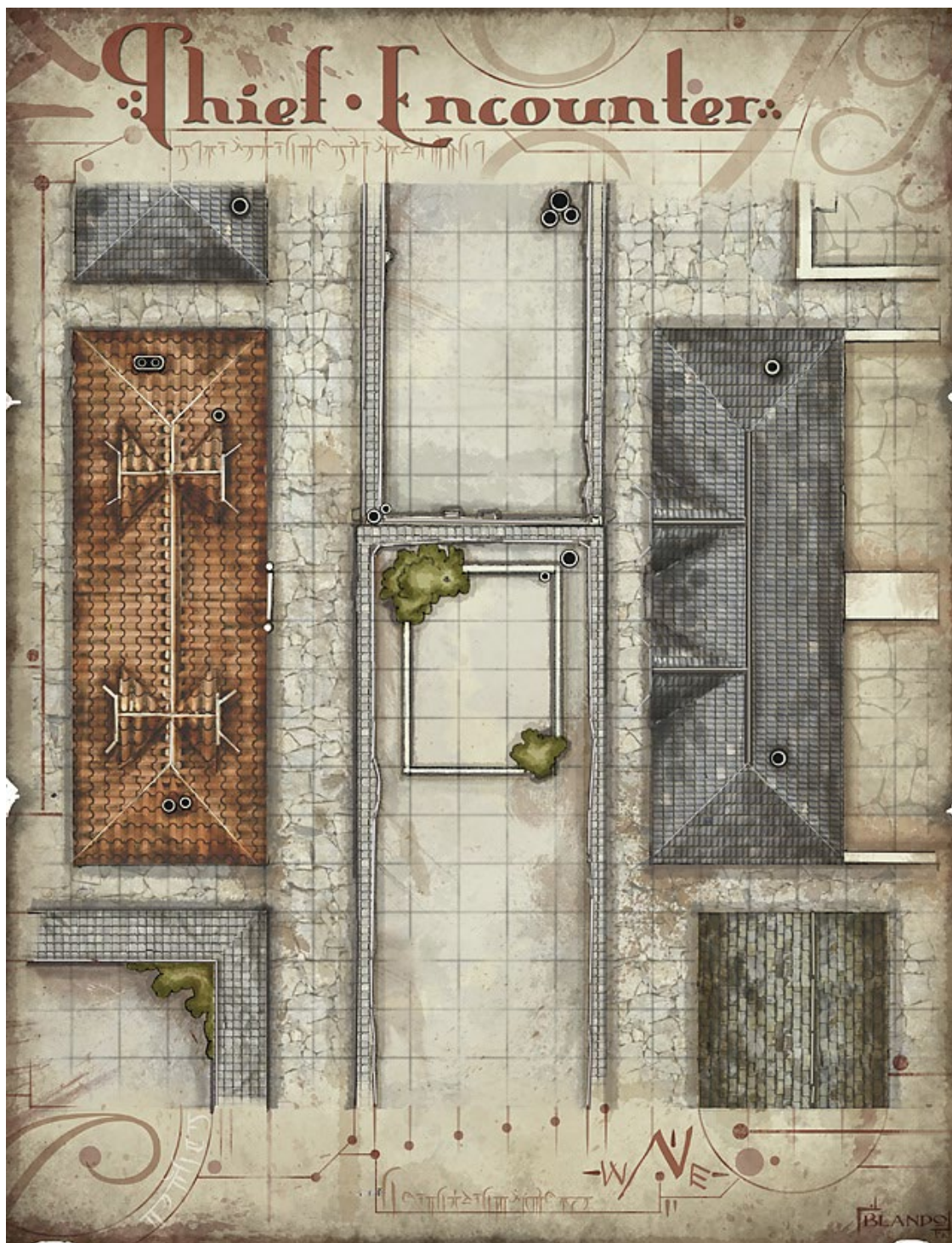
supplement is also available now on the DMs Guild!

COMPETITIONS

We also feature races from *Dungeon* magazine on the previous page and you'll find untagged maps below to use in your campaign. First up, from the *Cross City Race*:

With a great deal of gravitas, the captain of the watch passes before each contestant, bows, and presents them with a small scroll bound up with red ribbon—the message to be delivered at the end of the race. With this accomplished, he paces to the side of the starting line and raises a bright red handkerchief and waves it furiously to signal the guards. In a moment there is a loud ‘CLANG!’ right behind the runners as the portcullis drops. The race has begun!

Thief Encounter



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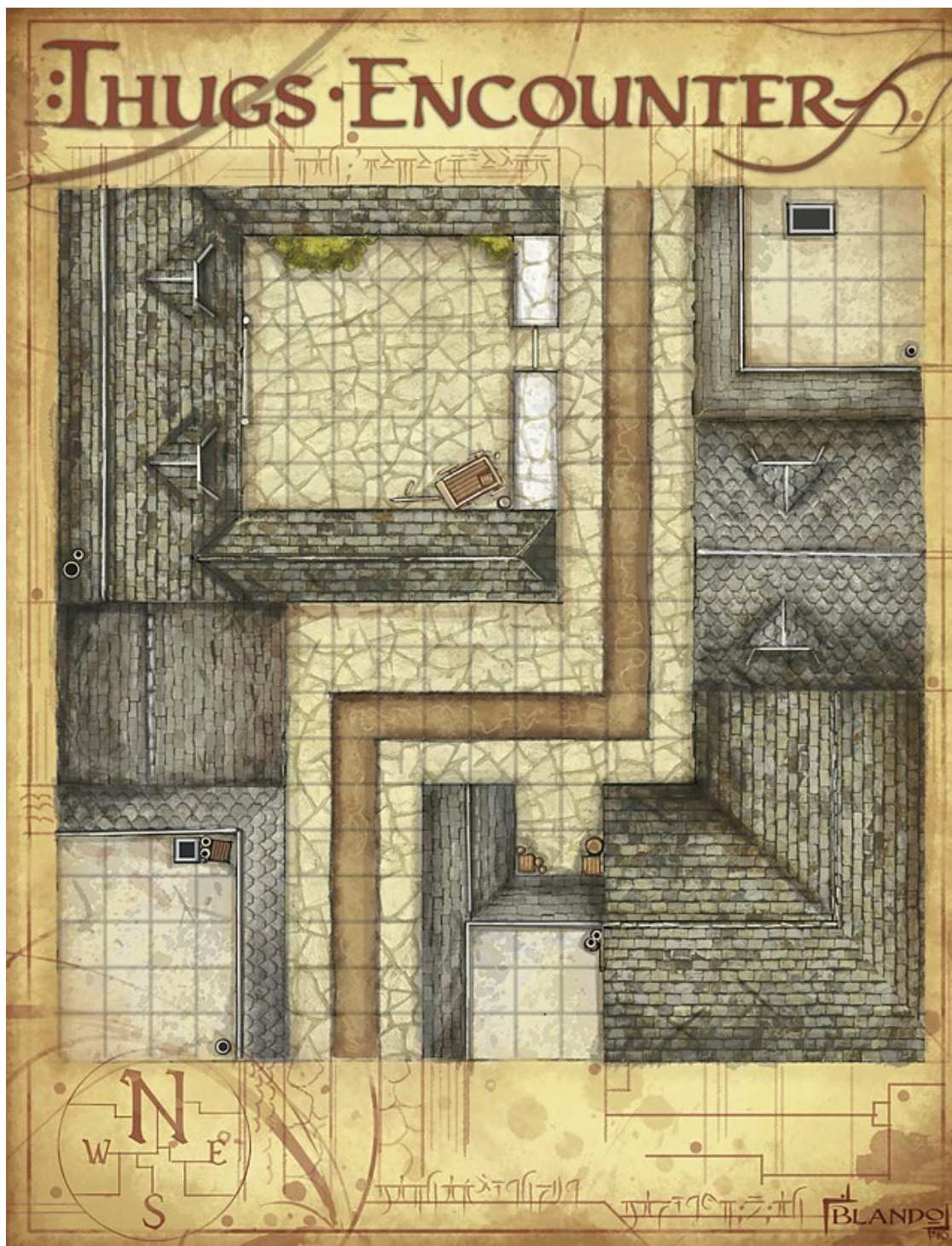
Dog Encounter



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(high res image [here](#))

Thugs Encounter



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And from Owlbear Run:

On the morning of the race, the owlbears are harnessed and transported in great wooden wagons from their pens to the fields outside of town. The teams take their places beside the owlbear wagons—which are spaced 100 yards apart—while a massive crowd gathers outside the stockade wall of Telvorn, cheering champions

and heckling rivals. Lord Burl looks from team to team to ensure that each one is ready to begin. Satisfied, he motions the attendants to unlock the wagons.

“Let the Owlbear Run begin!” Lord Burl proclaims.

Trail Map

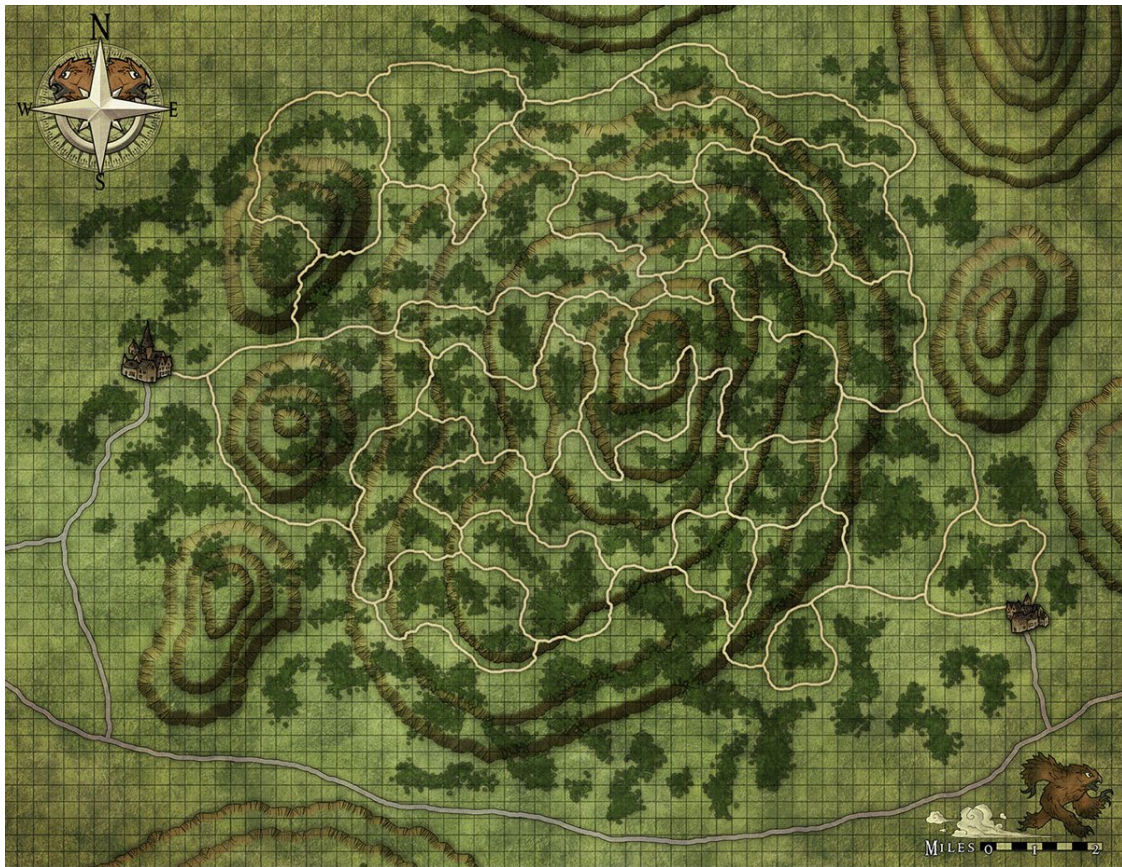
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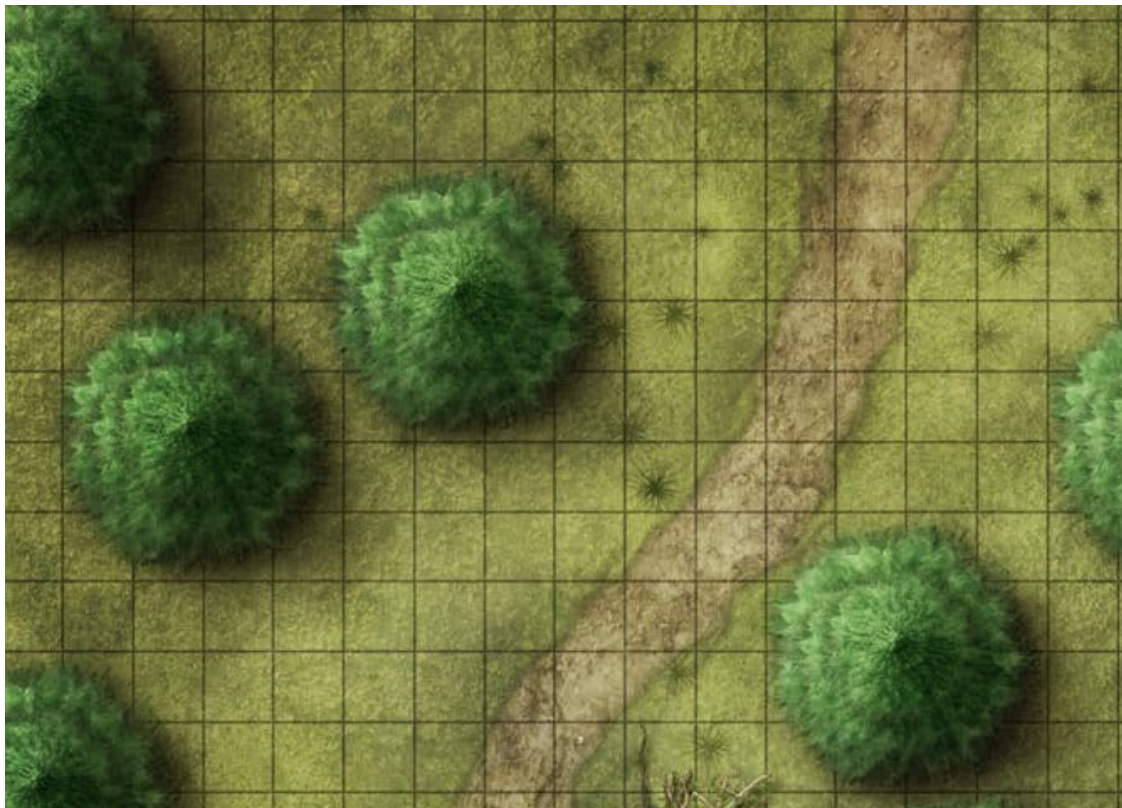


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Adventure Maps A-D

A

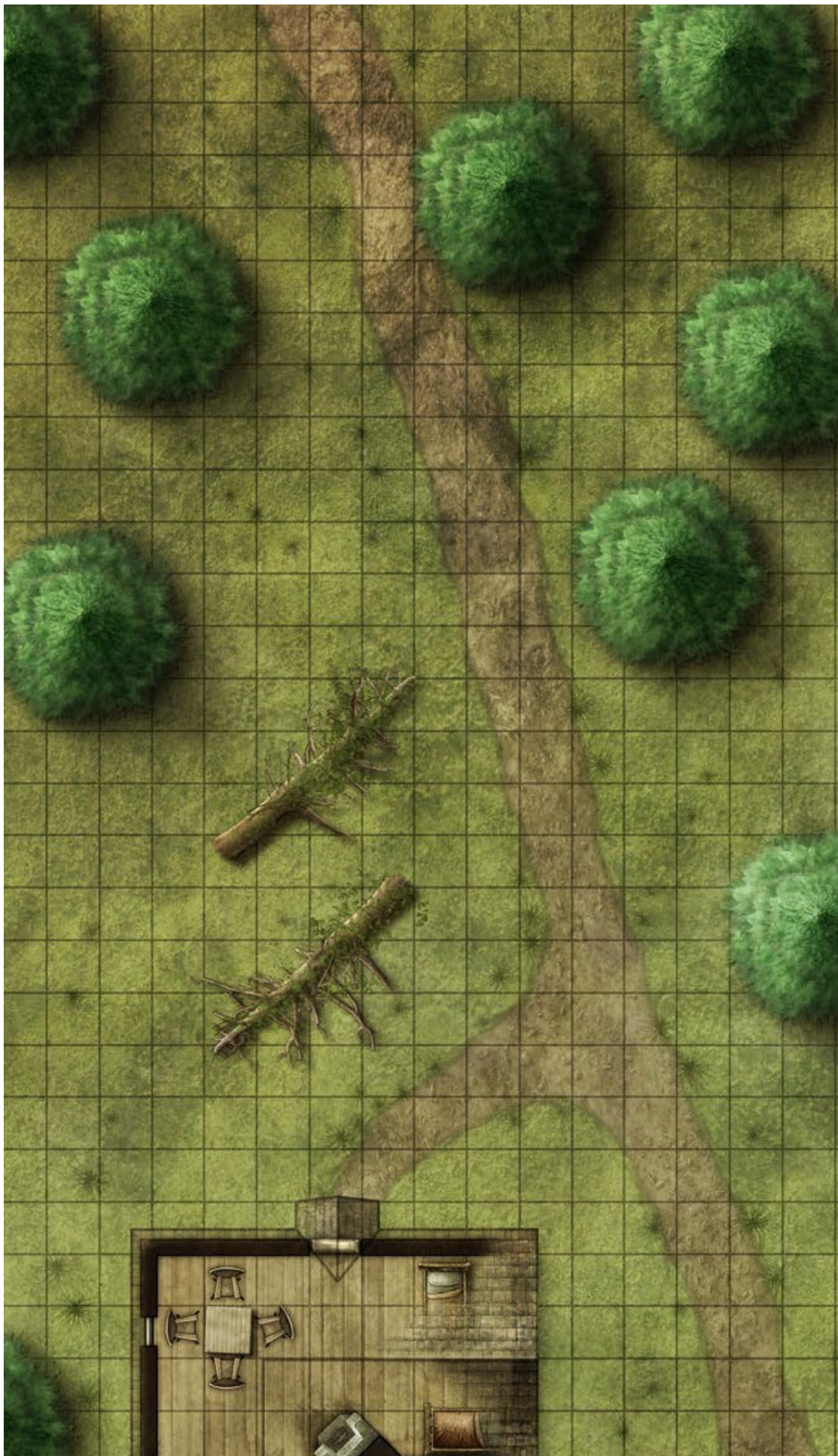




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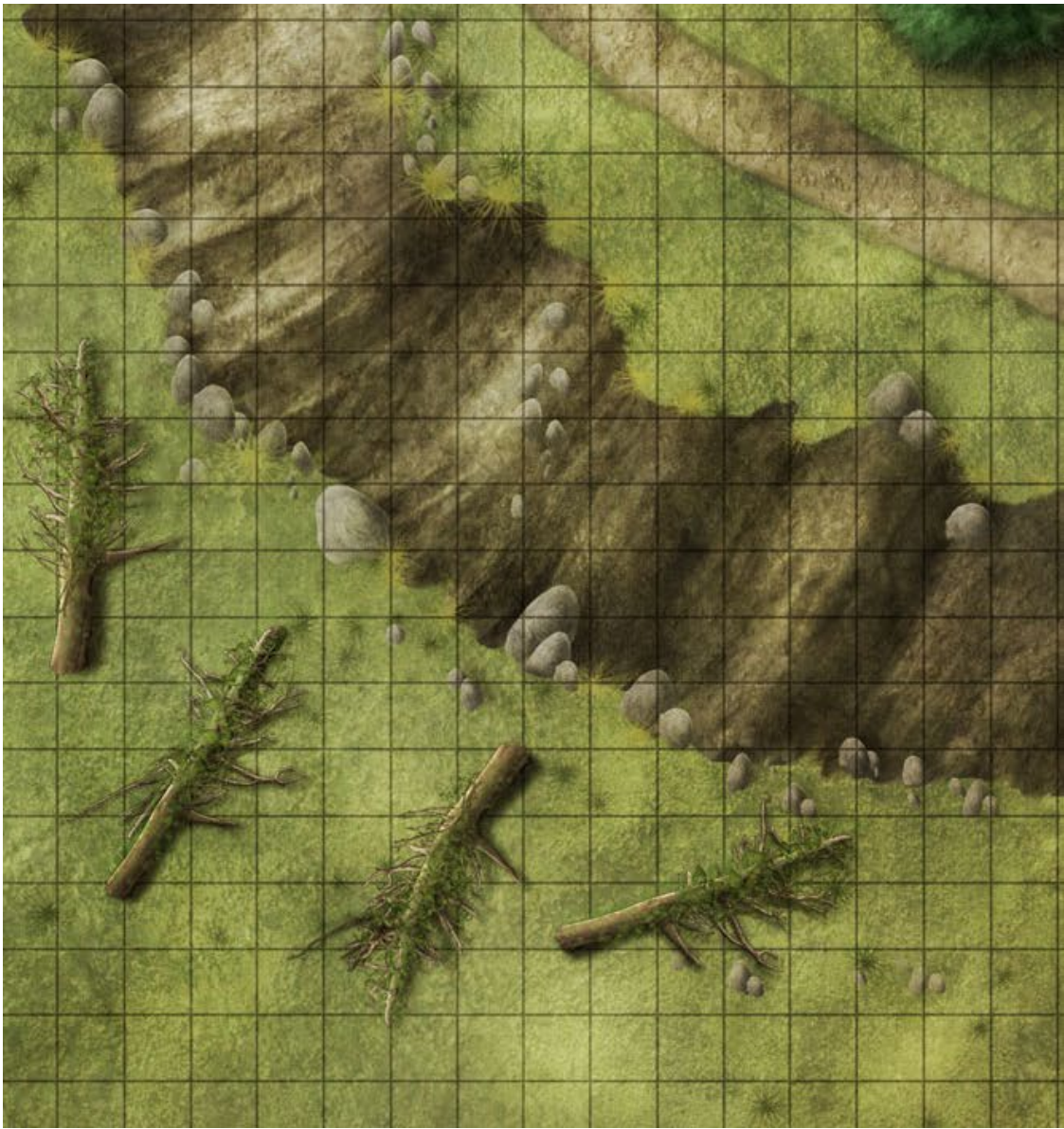




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D





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DOWNLOAD ADVENTURE MAPS A-D

FLOOR IS LAVA

When you're ready for a game of *Floor is Lava*, you might make use of the following maps, depending on whether it's a friendly competition or an actual dungeon obstacle:

White Plume Mountain

In this funhouse-style adventure, one encounter involves crossing a cavern filled with geysers and swinging chains. Instead of lava, the floor is equally dangerous boiling mud.

Tagged



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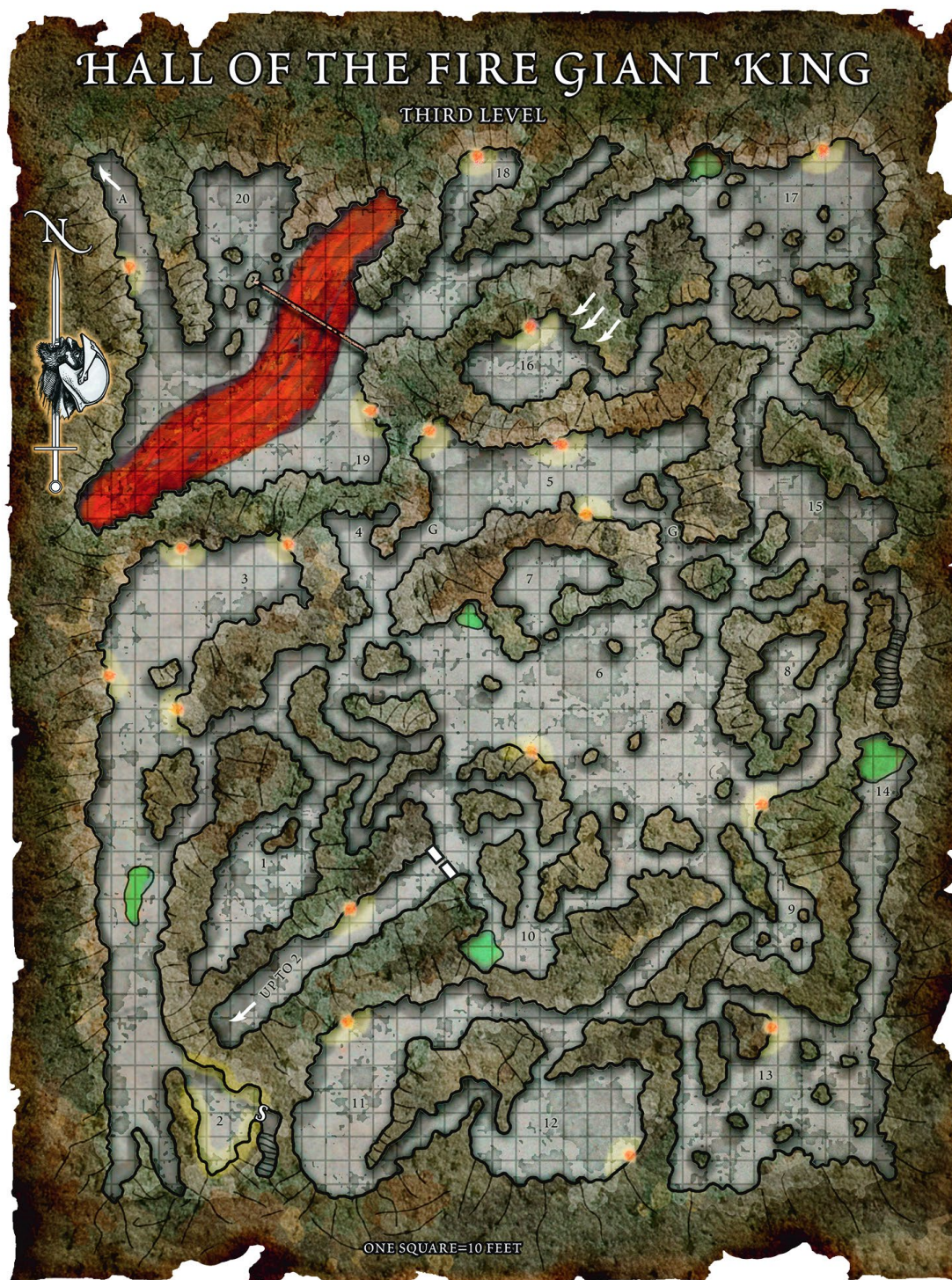
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Hall of the Fire Giant King

When it comes to actual lava, you might have the molten river from *Hall of the Fire Giant King* overflow its banks and fill the rest of the

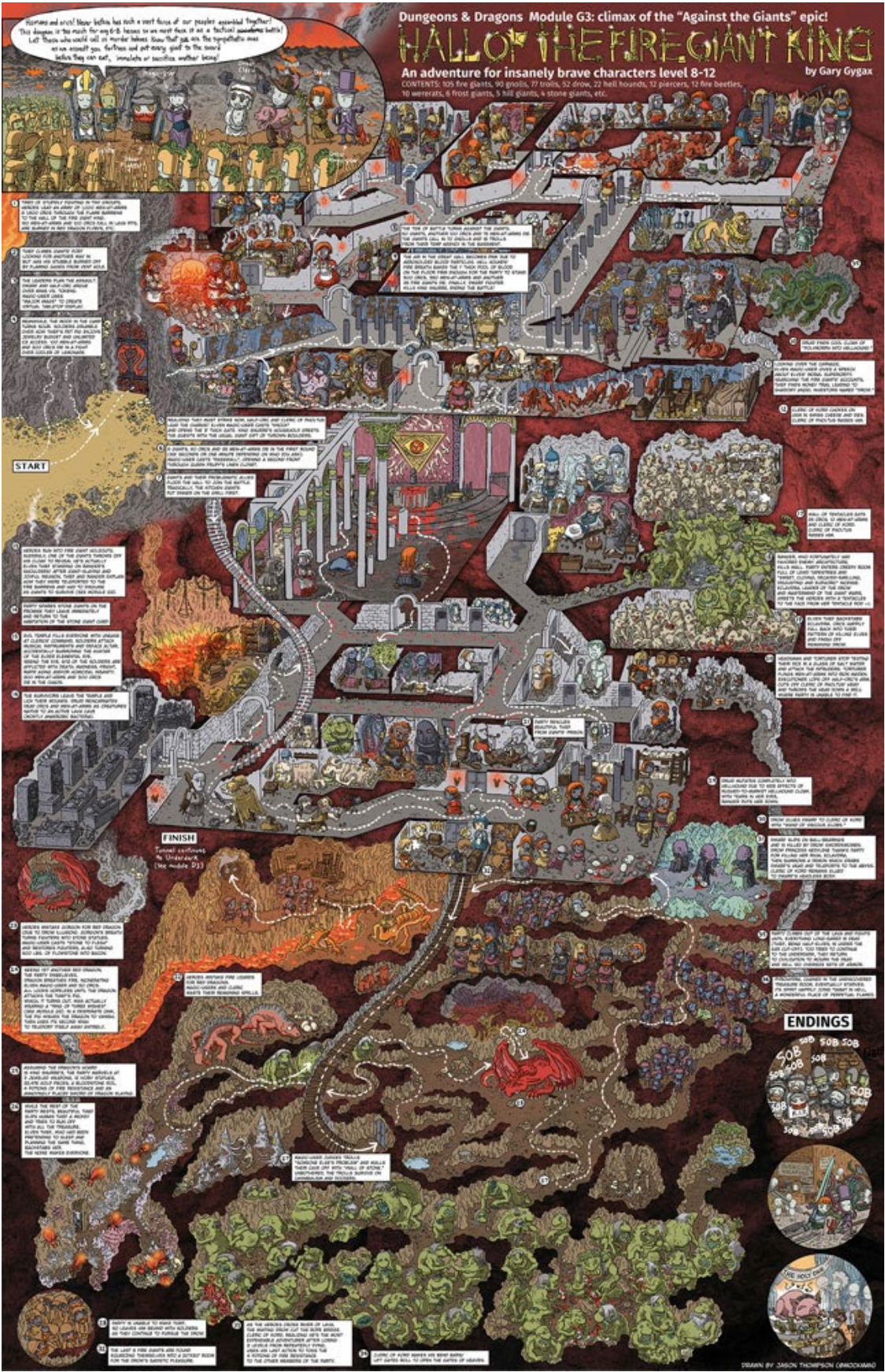
dungeon level.



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Plus, if you missed the original release of Jason Thompson's cartoon walkthrough map, here's his version of [King Snurre's fame hall!](#)



(Select to view)

(high res [here](#))

Tales from the Yawning Portal is available now with an MSRP of \$49.95. Order a physical copy at your **local game store**, book stores such as **Barnes & Noble**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**, or find a digital version at **Fantasy Grounds**, **Steam**, **Roll20**, and **D&D Beyond**.

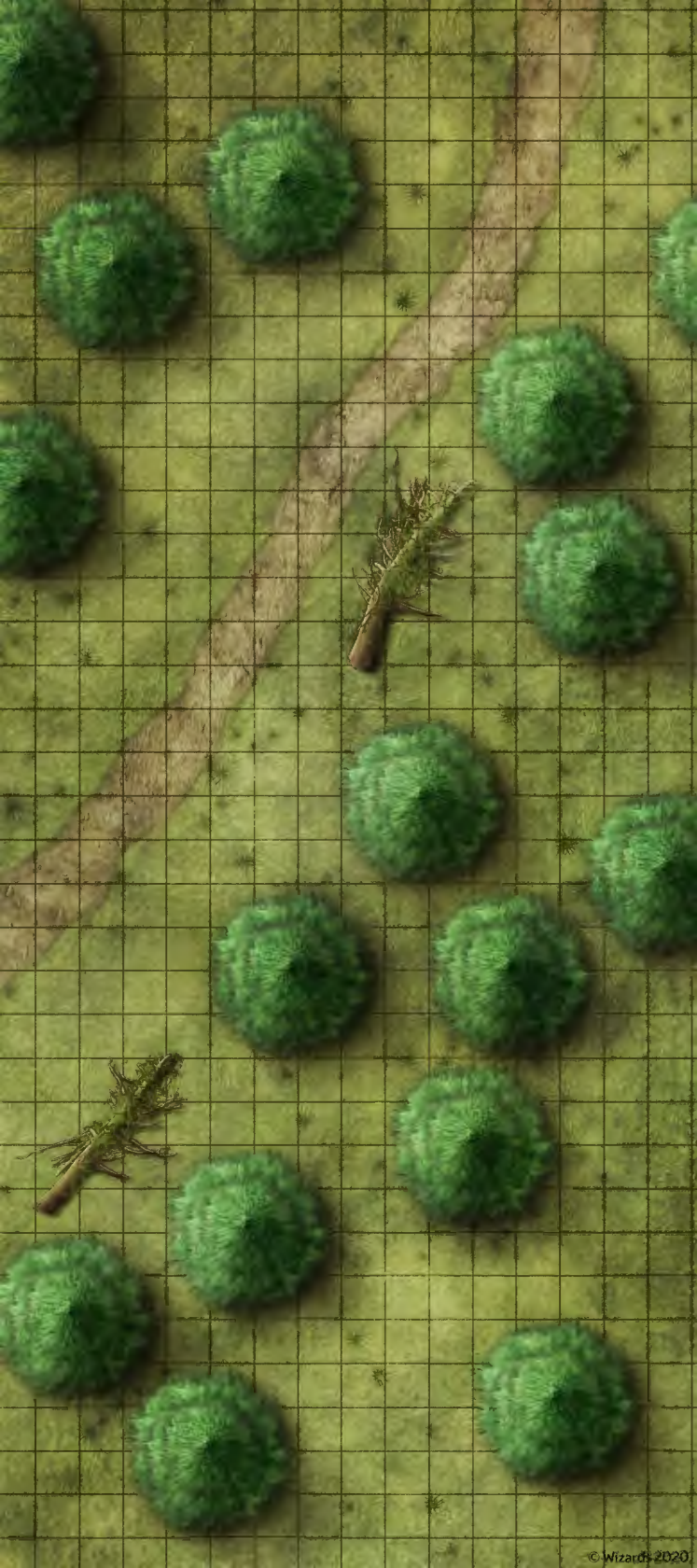
CARTOGRAPHERS

As always, our appreciation goes out to our amazing cartographers; this issue, these include Jared Blando, Jason A. Engle, Mike Schley, and Jason Thompson.

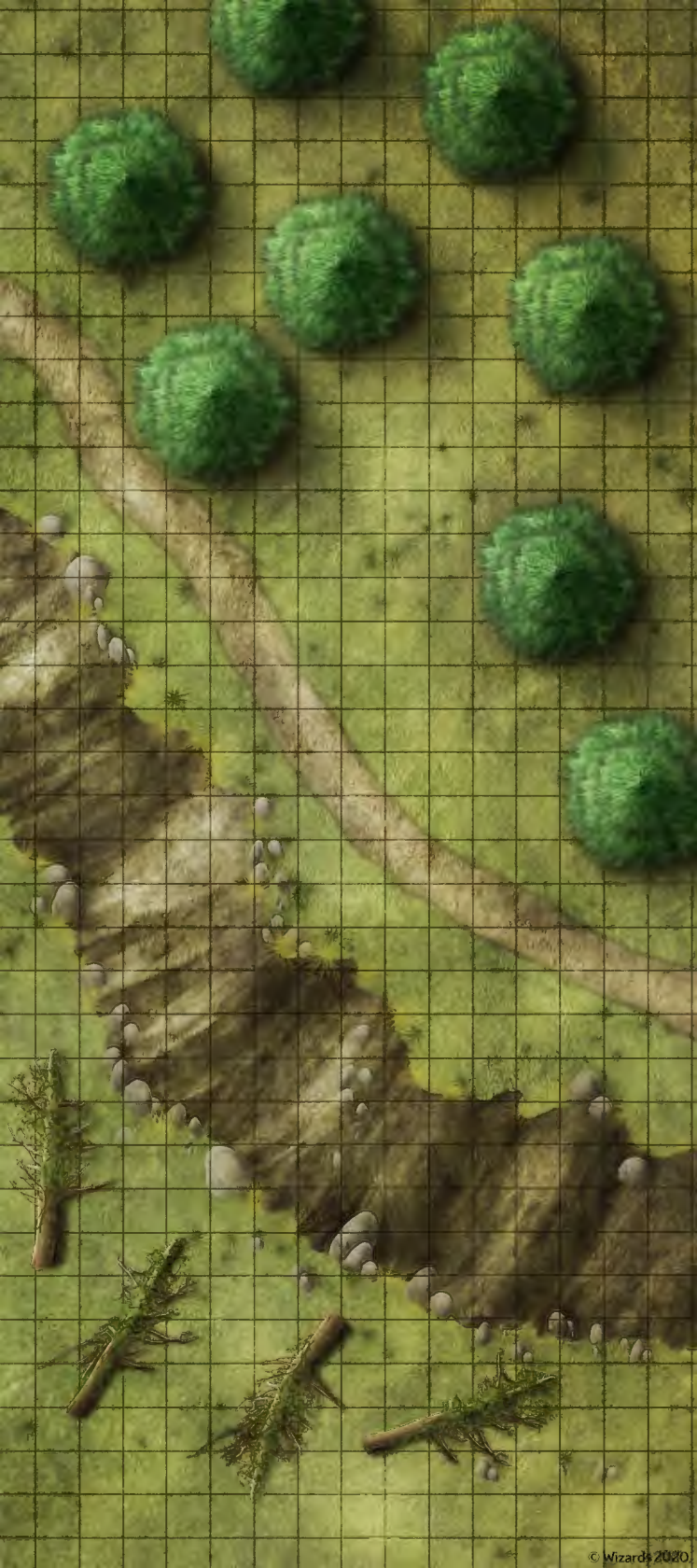


“Mix a little curiosity with a great map and that can practically write an adventure for you. Any of these maps could make for a great one shot—download them and give it a go! I subscribe to a number of mapmakers on Patreon and one of my favorites is this one ([click here](#)) by Domille’s Wondrous Works.”

BACK TO TOP









Humans and orcs! Never before has such a vast force of our peoples assembled together! This dungeon is too much for any 6-8 heroes so we must face it as a tactical ~~assault~~ battle! Let those who would call us murder hoboes know that we are the sympathetic ones as we assault your fortress and put every giant to the sword before they can eat, immolate or sacrifice another being!

Cleric Magic-User Thief Cleric Dwarf Other Cleric Dwarf Other Cleric Dwarf

Dungeons & Dragons Module G3: climax of the "Against the Giants" epic!

HALL OF THE FIRE GIANT KING

An adventure for insanely brave characters level 8-12

CONTENTS: 105 fire giants, 90 gnolls, 77 trolls, 52 drow, 22 hell hounds, 12 piercers, 12 fire beetles, 10 wererats, 6 frost giants, 5 hill giants, 4 stone giants, etc.

1 Tired of stupidly fighting in tiny groups, heroes lead an army of 1000 men-at-arms & 1500 orcs through the flame barrens to the hall of the fire giant king. 150 men-at-arms and 100 orcs fall in lava pits, are burned in red dragon flybys, etc.

2 Thief climbs giant's fort looking for another way in but has his stumble burned off by flaming gases from vent hole.

3 The leaders plan the assault. Dwarf and half-orc argue over mine vs. tokens. Magic-user uses "major image" to create virtual tabletop display.

4 Meanwhile, the mood in the camp turns sour. Soldiers grumble over how thief's pet pig enjoys jewelry budget and unlimited ice access. 100 men-at-arms and 200 orcs die in a fight over cooler of lemonade.

5 Realizing they must strike now, half-orc and cleric of Pholtus lead the charge! Elven magic-user casts "knock" and opens the 3" thick gate. King Snurre's household greets the guests with the usual giant gift of thrown boulders.

6 5 giants, 50 orcs and 25 men-at-arms die in the first round (5th seconds or one minute depending on who you ask). Magic-user casts "fissure wall", opening a second front through queen Frumpy's linen closet.

7 Giants and their problematic allies flood the hall to join the battle. Tragically, the kitchen giants put dinner on the grill first.

8 The tide of battle turns against the giants. 50 giants, another 100 orcs and 75 men-at-arms die. The giants call in to gnolls and 18 trolls from their temp agency in the basement.

9 The air in the great hall becomes pink due to aerosolized blood particles. Hell hounds' fire breath bakes the 1" thick pool of blood on the floor firm enough for the party to stand. 500 orcs, 350 men-at-arms and another 25 fire giants die. Finally, dwarf fighter kills king Snurre, ending the battle!

10 Druid finds cool cloak of "polymorph into hellhound."

11 Looking over the carnage, elven magic-user gives a speech about elves' moral superiority. Searching the fire giant's accounts, thief finds money trail leading to shadowy angel investors named "Drow."

12 Cleric of Kord chokes on spit in shiny cheese and dies. Cleric of Pholtus raises him.

13 Heroes run into fire giant holdouts. Suddenly, one of the giants throws off his cloak to reveal he's actually elven thief standing on ranger's shoulders! After giant-slaying and joyful reunion, thief and ranger explain how they were teleported to the fire barrens and had to disguise as giants to survive (see module G2).

14 Party spares stone giants on the promise they leave immediately and return to the habitation of the stone giant chief.

15 Evil temple fills everyone with unease. At cleric's command, soldiers attack musical instruments and deface altar, accidentally summoning the avatar of the elder elemental eye. Seeing the eye, 50% of the soldiers are afflicted with death, madness, fright, rapid aging and/or homicidal insanity. 200 men-at-arms and 300 orcs die in the chaos.

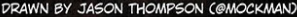
16 The survivors leave the temple and

17 Wall of tentacles eats 25 orcs, 10 men-at-arms and cleric of Kord. Cleric of Pholtus raises him.

18 Ranger, who fortunately had favored enemy: architecture, kills wall. Party enters creepy room full of lewd tapestries and "sweet, cloying, decayed-smelling, disgusting and euphoric" incense. Eclavdra, leader of the drow and mastermind of the giant wars, greets the heroes with 6 tentacles to the face from her tentacle rod.

19 Elven thief backstabs eclavdra. Orcs happily fall back into their pattern of killing elves and finish off remaining drow.

20 Headman and torturer stop testing their dice in a glass of salt water and attack the intruder. Torturer flings men-at-arms into iron maiden. Executioner lops off half-orc's arm, cuts off cleric of Pholtus' head and throws the head down a well where party is unable to find it.



Next Issue: Dragon+ 34

Best to light the jack o' lantern to scare the shadows from our pages this Halloween!



We have plenty of treats (and more than a few tricks hidden up our sleeves) when we return with issue #34 in October!

Monsters and witches stalk our pages as we take a deeper dive into the gothic horror of *Curse of Strahd Revamped* and learn more about the figure they call the “Witch Queen” in *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything*.

We’ll also meet a divination wizard called Cornelius who’s had the secrets of the universe opened up to him—but would still rather chase a ball! Well, he is a golden retriever. Russ Charles and **former Dragon+ cover artist April Prime** talk awakened animals as we spotlight their innovative work on *Dungeons & Doggies* and *Cats & Catacombs*.

Speaking of covers, Canadian cartoonist and *The Great Dalmuti: Dungeons & Dragons* artist Troy Little brings his unique perspective to *Dragon+*.

There’s all this, plus more exclusive previews, all our regulars such as the Best of the DMs Guild, another delve into the imposing *Dragon* archive, and much, *much* more!

(Contents subject to change)

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CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

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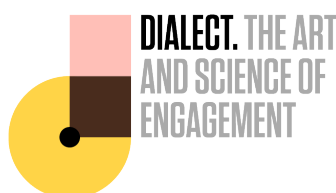
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